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Offering —Nandalal Bose

GLANCING BACK

EACH instant, under the slow erosion of time, the headlands of the future are decaying and becoming the sediment of the deep, tideless sea of the past. In this ceaseless flux, there is no immobile vantage point on which one can take a stand and look before and after. Nevertheless, the memory of things that have been is clearly demarcated from the dreams that are to be fulfilled in the days to come, by the moving edge of the present. As a measure of duration, the cycle of the year mediates between the rapid rhythm of day and night and the longer duration that separates the cradle from the grave.

Even the eternal mountains have been sculptured by wind and rain through millions of years. For measuring their life our human year is too short a unit. The founders of all great institutions have had the fond hope that their progeny will last as long as the hills. Nevertheless, modesty has triumphed in the end and man has consented to approximate the life of institutions to his own days on the earth. Thus, the lapse of twentyfive years marks the Silver Jubilee. In our own case, 1954 should really have been the jubilee year. But the completion of our permanent home was delayed somewhat and hence the celebration of the jubilee this year.

Glancing back, we feel that we can be legitimately proud of having fulfilled a noble mission during the quarter of a century that has gone by. After the decline of the art since the times of the Moghuls and the Rajputs, a general revival of interest proved a tremendous necessity. But Delhi became the hub of an empire and the previous regime was not very much interested in the arts. A soulless, official atmosphere thickened like a fog over this historic city. The mission which we have fulfilled and to which we will dedicate ourselves with renewed vigour in the future as well, has been to introduce some colour into this drab landscape of the spirit.

Colour, if we are to believe the physicist, is an illusion, for the difference between blue and red is Pythagorean and quantitative : a mere difference in the frequency of vibrations. But when the universe will have traced its course from primary vapour to primary vapour by way of cataclysms and all is swallowed up in the white radiance of eternity, the memory of dawn and dusk, of green meadows and blue oceans will yet linger, if only in the mind of the Poet of Creation. And since the death of the universe is not imminent, let us accept with gratitude the pageant of colour which the alchemy of our retina and nerves and optical centres has arranged for us.

How significant colour experience is to the plentitude of life has been brought out by the brilliant analysis of the spectrum of Gogol by Belyi. His patiently collected statistical data on references to colour in Gogol's writings show the yellow graph rising steadily from the joyous "Evenings in the Village" through "Taras Bulba" and making its greatest quantitative leap upwards in the second volume of "Dead Souls" where the gold is not the gold of gold-plate and gold thread but the gold of the cathedrals and crosses of the Orthodox Church. Recently, Francois Germain has made a similar analysis of the rainbow spectrum of De Vigny, relating the brightness of the poet's colour references to the exaltation of his mood.

The Capital's public must have had the opportunity for studying over half a lakh of paintings in the numerous exhibitions organised by the Society since its inception. With six galleries now, we will be having two or three exhibitions every week throughout the season. In these exhibitions priority is given to new artists so that new talent is not discouraged by lack of opportunities.

Though the pursuit of beauty is really experienced as its own reward by the majority of artists, the problem of their economic security has always been acute. The Society has been of great help in contributing to a solution of this problem. During the last five years alone, paintings worth Rs. 4 lakhs have been sold on behalf of the artists by the Society. The works of the artists can reach a larger public through the Society because it not only holds exhibitions in Delhi, but takes round travelling art exhibitions to many important centres of our far-flung land.

Medieval literature is full of references to artists' guilds and the high esteem in which they were held by Society. Recovering this lost status is a tremendous task. In this direction also, however, we have been making some efforts. Substantial commissions for mural decorations at the Railway Centenary, the Telegraph Centenary and other exhibitions have been accepted by the Society as a whole and executed by groups of artists consisting of teams of juniors working under the guidance of senior artists. The remuneration was, however, divided equally among all the workers. Commenting on this enterprise on the part of the Society, the "Times of India" wrote : "This is as laudable as it is important for it endeavours to recover in these days of rampant individualism and high pressure publicity, the anonymity of the guild principle which contributed so much to the healthy spirit of artistic creation in the middle ages both in India and Europe."

It is a human tendency to despise the unfamiliar. The life of the turbulent Macedonian North was a closed book to the polished Athenian

and that is why Demosthenes roundly abused Philip of Macedon as a barbarian. We, with our hindsight, can afford to smile, for it was the barbarian Alexander who spread Hellenism throughout the ancient world. Since those days the world has drawn closer together. We in this country have drunk deeply at the fountains of Western culture. Nobody in this country would think of Cordelia as a Memsaheb or Macbeth as a Scotchman without inhibitions. And the death of Bhishma is as poignant an Eastern moment as the hour of Western twilight when Achilles "lay under the dust storm, the mighty limbs flung mightily, the riding of war forgotten".

This is as it should be. But we should not take this cultural synthesis for granted, for even today there are great realms of Western aesthetic experience which we have not assimilated fully. One instance is European music. In the case of painting and the plastic arts, however, we have made great headway and the Society can legitimately claim to have played a major role in this cultural synthesis. Exhibitions of Indian art have been organised by the Society in many foreign countries, in China and Japan in South-East Asia, in Afghanistan, Iraq Syria, Egypt and Turkey in the Middle-East, in England, France, Germany, Poland and Russia in Europe. Likewise, the works of the artists of these countries, besides many more, have been exhibited in its galleries. When political tension was running high, the regular visitor to our galleries could see carpets from Russian Turkestan, porcelain from the People's Republic of China and water colour masterpieces from the galleries of U.S.A., without even noticing that he was undergoing an unusual experience. Our mission will be to continue our work in such a way that the world will unconsciously assume that the art of any country is the heritage of the world as a whole, whatever be its political pattern.

According to Plato, one who is harmoniously constituted could never be unjust. And for this harmonious constitution he looked to music, for its moulding action on human temperament. "Rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul, bearing grace in their movements and making the soul graceful". This purifying action is not the sole prerogative of music but should be held to be the power of all art forms. Today, however, we are willing and able to take the cue in respect of the art of music and allied forms as well, in addition to painting, the plastic arts and handicrafts. For we have equipped ourselves with a theatre with the biggest proscenium in the whole of the capital.

Fresh responsibilities and new possibilities are emerging over the horizon for us. Their fulfilment will be our target for the years to come before our Golden Jubilee—K.C.

SIVA NATARAJA, THE COSMIC DANCER

An Introduction to the Study of the Theme in Indian Art

By P.R. SRINIVASAN, M.A., MADRAS MUSEUM.

ACCORDING to the ancient wisdom of India, the cosmos comes into being when the "primal rhythmic energy" is in "orderly harmony".

The esoteric manner of expression of the old seers often makes their inner meaning difficult to understand. Nevertheless, this intuition seems to correspond with today's scientific cosmology. As Needham stated in his monumental study of ontogenetic processes, today we have to speak in terms of energy and organisation instead of matter and energy. Evolution is possible against the perpetual drift of matter towards a heat death, only because there are contrapuntal forces maintaining energy in meta-stable states of organisation.

Again, according to the sages of India, the beauty of natural phenomena and living forms is due to the fact that they retain the primal impulse of orderly energy. We have only to read D'Arcy Thompson's great work on growth and form to get a clarification of this cryptic utterance in terms of modern science.

It is now easy to see why dance was seen from early times as a most effective symbol of the cosmic process. Dance involves patterned, significant organisation of energy and rhythm. Its ecstasy is an end in itself. For creation also it is impossible to look beyond the process itself to utilitarian motivations.

Today, in the light of the work of Lemaitre and others we have to accept a beginning for the universe. At the opposite terminal is its heat death when energy will reach a dead level and will become unavailable for work. The universe thus traces a parabolic curve from primary vapour to primary vapour by way of cataclysms. The Hindu mind, however, has looked beyond to an eternal repetition of this process. According to Hindu cosmology, cosmos and chaos are said to occur alternatively, during intervals of time which are, however, immeasurable according to human standards of measurement. The former prevails during the day of Brahma, the Creator; and the latter during his night. Though he is associated with the creation of all that we see in the universe, it is said that the creation of the cosmos is due to the sportive activity (*lila*) preceded by an inward withdrawal or penance (*tapas*) of a Supreme Being who is different from Brahma. The two other gods of

the Hindu Trinity are Vishnu and Siva ; the former is the presiding deity of protection and the latter is associated with the disintegrating phase of the life of the universe. In order that the universe is prevented from being destroyed by evil forces and its protection ensured at all times, Vishnu is said to incarnate when these forces are in ascendance. But in the case of Siva, besides his primary role as the presiding deity of the systole of the cosmic rhythm, he is said to perform several beneficial sports (*lila*) which include also the *lila* of creating the cosmos. Unless he wills, the all-enveloping darkness (*tamas*) will not be removed. His willingness followed by penance (*tapas*) and the subsequent sportive activity are responsible for the cosmic effulgence which is capable of dispelling the darkness and re-creating life out of that incohate and unmanifest (*avyakta*) matter. Naturally he becomes the presiding deity over the cosmic evolution which, as has been mentioned above, results from his macro-cosmic dance. So when Siva is said to create, he is conceived of as the cosmic dancer and a supreme actor on the cosmic stage as well.

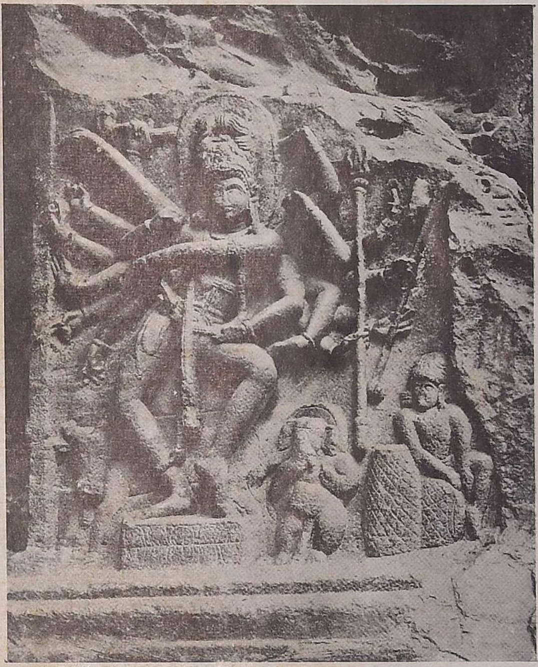
That Siva, above all the deities of the Hindu pantheon, is celebrated as the Cosmic Dancer, is due to the fact that he is the presiding deity or the lord over the art of histrionics in general. He appears in numerous roles ; as a mendicant (*Bhikshatana*), a musician (*Vinadhara*), a yogi, (*Yogesvara*), an archer (*Tripurantaka*) and a wrestler (*Gajantaka*). His *lila* always stands out as perfect illustration of histrionics. Naturally such a versatile and accomplished actor alone can perform the most difficult and distinguished role of the dancer too. In his aspect as a dancer (*Nata*) Siva therefore becomes the supreme dancer or the king of all dancers (*Nataraja*) and the dance that he performs is called the cosmic dance (*Nadanta*).

Subsequently Siva was conceived of as having transmitted the art of dance to his disciples (*sishyas*) in order that they in their turn spread it in the universe for the benefit of all creation. Later on, the art, thus derived from the lord, was employed primarily for the edification of religion amongst the people, although a variety of it was also developed on purely secular lines calculated to give delectation to the people at large. Here we are concerned with the various forms in which Nataraja, the Master Dancer, was conceived of and delineated in the plastic and graphic arts belonging to different periods and regions, their aesthetic appeal and the significance that came to be attached to the various forms.

The earliest authority to collect the data pertaining to Siva's dance and put them into a logical form was the great sage Bharata. His

magnum opus called the *Natya Sastra* is the basis for all the treatises on the art that are now in vogue. That this sage himself mentions the fact that several generations of teachers of the art existed before him is evidence enough to prove the antiquity of the art as well as the existence of many schools. The date of Bharata is about the 4th-3rd century B.C. although according to some, his work bears features of literary works of a much later time. However, great credit is due to this sage, not only for preserving the data relating to the art as were available in his time, but also for raising its status equal to that of other *sastras* like *Arthasastra* and *Dharmasastra.* As it was Brahma who is said to have expounded the *sastra* to the sages it is also called a Veda *i.e. Natyaveda.* Bharata has been rightly given a permanent niche in the grand edifice of Indian culture, because it was due to his incessant and remarkable efforts that the art got the recognition it deserved and this at a time when it, along with music, was the target of vehement criticism and outright condemnation at the hands of great authorities like Manu.

According to Bharata's *Natyasastra* it was Tandu, one of the chief disciples of Siva, who codified for the first time the rules relating to the art as demonstrated by Siva and hence the dance of Siva came to be called Tandava. In the *Natyasastra* mention is made of one hundred and eight modes (*karanas*) of dancing. These have to be taken as forming the main types only, because each one of the modes is capable of admitting several sub-divisions as can be seen in actual practice. Some of them are gentle and they are to be classified as *Lasya.* Further, each mode is characterised by a special stance, glance, hand-poses and twists of head and hips, torso and thigh. Some of them being too difficult of execution by mortals and possible only for the immortals who are not bound by the forces of gravitation etc., have not, however, survived in actual practice. The *agamas* like the *Karana* and the *Amsumadbheda* also recognise the existence of these one hundred and eight modes but deal with only nine of them which according to these texts are the most important. In some *Sthalapuranas* there is reference to sixteen modes of Siva's dance while the Saivite religious texts by Tamil authors, affirm that Siva danced in sixty-four sacred shrines of Tamilnad, without mentioning the exact mode in each case. In some of the early Tamil texts only three types of dance are mentioned. But in some Tamil texts on Saivism, emphasis is laid on six or seven forms of Siva's dance. Apparently, except for difference in terminology or multiplication of it in the case of certain modes, the later texts are substantially in agreement with the *Natyasastra* with regard to the dance of Siva as a whole. The difficulty experienced in connecting some of the modes of dance with special names as met with in these texts with similar ones in the *Natyasastra* is however due to the fact that these texts,



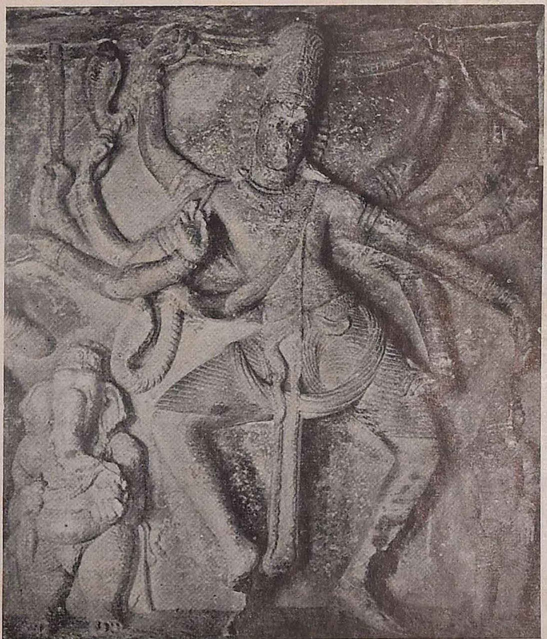


Fig. 1. Nataraja, ten-armed, in the Catura mode, dancing on the back of his vehicle, bull (Nandi), East Bengal—about 9-10th Century A. D.

Fig. 2. Catura—Tandava Nataraja with eighteen arms. Cave No 1. Badami, Bijapur Dist. About 6th Century A.D.

Fig. 3. Lalita — Tandava Nataraja with ten arms. Aihole, Bijapur Dist. About 7th Century A. D.

Fig. 5. Nataraja, eight-armed, in the Katisamapose, Ellora, About 8th cent. A.D.

being later in date and containing more recent information on the subject, describe certain forms which, although covered by the typical *karanas* detailed in the *Natyasastra*, have not been specially noticed there. Can any limit be set to the modes of dance that the Lord can perform ? So when the enlightened souls were singing the praises of Lord Nataraja variously in the shrines at various places, it was not as if they had deliberately wanted to confuse later-day analysts with numerous jingling words of little or no meaning. Far from it, the terms will be found to be pregnant with great significance both in their primary (*rudhi*) connotation as well as in their esoteric secondary (*vyangya*) meaning. For when the sages and saints were describing the dance of Siva in those places, they must have visualised the dance in all its aspects and not as though the Lord was performing always a particular mode at a particular place associated with it according to tradition.

These interesting textual differences apart, the study of the actual representations of Nataraja in sculpture and painting of different periods and regions shows a good deal of variations in detail which have been introduced by master artists and sculptors. Combining in themselves a great *siddhi* (perfection) in their profession and exceptional devotion (*asadharana bhakti*) to the Lord, these "rishi-artists" introduced the innovations either due to the promptings of their genius and imagination or out of necessity to satisfy the dictates of the learned members of the society for whose worship representation was intended. Anyway the great truth behind the theme, the grandeur of its conception, the wonderful literary compositions bearing on it and the inspiration that it radiated, have all contributed to the great popularity of the theme throughout the ages, which no other theme enjoys in the realm of Indian culture in general.

BEGINNINGS OF THE ARTISTIC HISTORY OF THE THEME

Notwithstanding the importance and the popularity of the theme which goes back to the very beginnings of civilization, representations of it either in plastic or pictorial art date only from a comparatively late period in the history of India. As has been already said, the Vedas and the Upanishads have a number of references to the dance in general and also references hinting at the dance by its presiding deity, not then named as Nataraja or Natesa, but Rudra-Siva. References are there relating to all conceivable forms of deities as well. The period represented by this unique literature is unfortunately unrepresented by any actual archaeological finds worth the name. No doubt the finds of world-wide fame, excavated at the various sites such as Mohenjodaro and Harappa in the Indus Valley are dated to a period slightly earlier than the Vedic period. While the difficulty met with in the case of the latter is the paucity of actual

remains, in the case of the antiquities of the Harappa culture it is the lack of literary evidence. Due to this, controversy is raging on the question of the dating of these antiquities ; a recent attempt to solve the tangled problem being in the direction of identifying the various finds in the light of significant passages from Vedic literature. Amongst the innumerable antiquities is also a figurine of which the head portion and the legs are missing. The workmanship of the remainder is such that, though a small figure, it has all the plastic qualities of a large figure in the round belonging to classical times. Apart from this, its neck shows signs that it carried more than one head and one of its legs is lifted up in the posture of dancing as is seen in the common Nataraja icons. That it had more heads than one, a feature which at that time was characteristic of deities, especially, Siva, as is evident from the famous Siva-Pasupati figure, and that the posture was one of dancing gave rise to the speculation that the figurine represented a dancer, probably the cosmic dancer, Nataraja. This cannot however be accepted as final in the absence of definite corroborative evidence which is now lacking.

Turning to the periods succeeding the Vedic-cum-Harappa culture period, the situation remains the same and no interesting antiquities worth the name have been found representing the period up till 300 B.C. The history of Indian culture of the subsequent period till about the beginnings of the Gupta empire in the fourth century A.D. is well known. During this period the dominant position was held by Buddhism and Buddhist antiquities of great value have survived. But the dominance of Buddhism did not mean the extinction of other religions although material evidences of Hinduism and Jainism of this period are few and far between. Amongst the few Hindu antiquities are not found any specimens of Nataraja. It must be remembered that this period was marked by the beginnings of the evolution of various icons including that of Siva. Sometimes in this period, Siva is shown with two hands standing by the side of a bull and sometimes with four hands. These occur in some of the coins of Huvishka and the later kings of the Kushan dynasty. To an earlier period belongs the famous *mukhalinga* of Siva from Bhita in North India. Most important of the antiquities of the period bearing on Saivism is the five-foot high, two-handed *alto-relievo* figure of Siva carved on the face of a Siva-linga which is still under worship in the Parasurameswara temple at Gudimallam in the North Arcot District of Madras State. The importance of this figure for our present study lies in the fact that here, Siva stands astride on a dwarfish figure called Apasmara or Muyalaka (Tamil) an invariable feature met with in the representations of almost all aspects of Siva including Nataraja in the Tamil country. Further, in the figures of Siva belonging to this early period, is seen the emergence slowly of his attributes which later on

assumed a bewildering variety with highly developed symbolic significance attached to each of them.

In the earlier phase of the Gupta period, however, the influence of Buddhism was still there, although the kings of the dynasty, being staunch followers of Hinduism made an all-out effort to popularise the culture based on *Sanatanadharma* which for some centuries before was pushed to the background. But the early Gupta kings being mostly followers of Vaishnavism, monuments embellished with sculptural and pictorial representations, of classical quality, representing *puranic* stories relating to Vaishnavism began to be erected. No doubt there were a few representations also of Saivite themes found interspersed amongst them ; but they were only a few items more than those obtained in the previous period and never came anywhere near the numerous and amazingly beautiful representations of Saivite themes which characterise in the periods since 7th century A.D. especially in South India and the Deccan. Consequently no specimen of the Nataraja of the period has survived in North India.

From the time of Harsha and Sasanka of Gauda, Hinduism began to assert itself. This assertion was a militant one, the result of which is apparent in the voluminous religious literature of the period as well as in the large number of Hindu monuments, those devoted to Saivism being in a majority. Amongst the vast quantity of sculptures showing Siva in his various aspects, owing to the inherent attraction of the theme, Nataraja sculptures form a good number. There are amongst them two main types. The first type shows Nataraja with multiple hands dancing on the floor with the legs in the *catura* or *lalita* mode and with *Nandi* behind or beside him. This type of image belonging to all periods is found throughout North India and North West India. The second type shows Nataraja with multiple hands with legs in *catura* or *lalita* dancing not on the floor but on the back of *Nandi*. This type appears to have been popular in Eastern India. A beautiful specimen of this is found, in the Dacca Museum. (Fig. 1). None of these shows Nataraja dancing on Apasmara-purusha. Besides these, hardly any other significant type of Nataraja occurs in the North. But amongst these two types themselves there appears to exist a number of sub-types which show a combination of the Vinadhara, Bhairava and other aspects with the main Nataraja form as well. The paucity of other interesting types and the peculiar combination referred to are indicative of the fact that here the texts followed were different from those followed in the Deccan and the South and that this form did not attain the celebrity and universality it obtained in the latter two regions, particularly in the South.

In the Deccan this theme has had a chequered career. The members of the early royal dynasties such as the Kadamba, the Rashtrakuta,

the Chalukya and the Vakataka that ruled over the region were Saiva in persuation rather than Vaishnava. This is known from their records as well as their monuments where numerous Saivite themes are beautifully represented. Of course there were also representations of themes of Vaishnavism. As regards the Nataraja theme, one of the earliest representations of it is found in the rock-cut cave at Badami (6th century A. D.). This is (Fig. 2) perhaps the earliest of the Nataraja figures ever represented in Indian art, barring probably the one occurring in a cave at Mogalrajapurm to be mentioned below. To a slightly later date belongs the Nataraja from Aihole (Fig. 3). In these and other sculptures of Nataraja dating before 700 A. D. of this area the features found in the main North Indian type such as dancing on the floor, continue except for variations of some details.

It is well known that from very early times the Chalukyas and the Pallavas of South India were "born enemies" and there were frequent wars between them. In the 8th century A. D. due to a local struggle in the South, the then ruling King of the Chalukya dynasty more than once invaded South India. Though he inflicted defeat on his Pallava adversary and entered his capital he did not destroy any of the sacred structures there. On the contrary, this Chalukyan king was so struck with the architectural beauty and the wonderful wealth of sculptures and paintings of the Kailasanatha shrine, that he donated lands for the temple and the donation has been recorded in an inscription. Naturally when the king returned he may have taken home with him *sthapatis* from the capital of the Tamil country in order to build similar wonders of architecture in his territory. That this really happened is borne out by the two temples at Pattadakkal which are based on the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, as well as by the inscriptions found on them which mention the names of the architects who were probably from the Tamil country. In fact, in one of these temples is found a Nataraja image similar in conception to a figure found at Kanchi. In this sculpture, the figure of Apasmara is seen below the foot of the god who has only four hands, characteristic of Tamilian figures, whereas in the Kanchi model, strangely, we see more hands than four. This fact shows that from about the 8th century A. D. Deccanese elements of sculptural representations came to be fused with certain elements of the traditions of sculpture of Tamilnad ; and hybrid forms, as in the Nataraja image in question, came to be developed. Another fine Nataraja illustrating this is also from Pattadakkal (Fig. 4.) (It may be remembered that such a combination of elements is quite evident especially in the examples of the architecture of the Deccan. Early temples of this region show this feature distinctly. It later on developed into a highly florid style as for instance in the temples of the 12th-13th century where the

Fig. 6. Siva, eight-armed dancing the Lalita mode, Cave No. XIV, Ellora. About 8th Cent. A.D.

Fig. 4. Nataraja, four-armed in the Catura mode, dancing on Apasmara. Pattadakkal, 8th Century A.D.

Fig. 7. Nataraja, eight-armed, in the Elakakridita mode, dancing on Apasmara. Hemavati, Anantapur Dist. About 9th Cent. A.D.

Fig. 8. Siva, eight-armed, dancing on Apasmara in the Urddhvajanu Mode, Mogalrajapuram, Krishna Dist. About 6th Cent. A.D.

mixture is hardly recognised.) When the Rashtrakutas were supreme in the Deccan they also continued the earlier tradition and two superb specimens of Nataraja from the caves at Ellora belonging to their period are shown here (Figs. 5 and 6).

The further development of the form of Nataraja in this region is not significant enough to call for special notice. But the members of the Nolamba dynasty who were ardent Saivites, seem to have favoured this form with the result that wonderful specimens of Nataraja are found in their area now represented by the Ballary-Anantapur region. One of the sculptures deserves especial notice. (Fig. 7). It is now in the Madras Museum and is dated to about 900 A. D. Here the Lord dances on Apasmara, the characteristic feature of the Southern Indian Nataraja, in an impossible pose where the torso is twisted to 90° at the abdomen so that a full frontal view is obtained of the portion from hip to ankle as well as of the portion above the abdomen. This pose corresponds to the ninety seventh *karana* of Bharata's *Natyasastra* called *elakakridita* or *urudvrittam.* In the whole range of Indian art this Nataraja may be said to be a unique specimen. The dexterity displayed by the *sthapati* in fashioning this masterpiece is marvellous and unsurpassed. As the Nolambas were hard hit during the Chola reign, the vigour and enlightenment apparent in the sculptures belonging to the earlier period of their rule, died out and no good sculptures belonging to the later period of their reign have survived.

In the south-eastern region, in and around ancient Kalinga, numerous temples were raised from about the 7th century onwards. Each one of them contained beautiful sculptures depicting Siva in his several aspects. Nataraja sculptures are also found amongst them, but even these are apparently in the main North Indian type,—Siva with multiple hands dancing, not on Apasmara, but on the floor in the *lalita* pose. As regards the execution and finish, these sculptures are in the true Orissan style and are noted for graceful postures, wonderful plasticity and subtle vigour, coupled with an apparent rusticity due to the rough material used for carving them. Of these, the Natesa from Mukhalingam and Biccavol dating from about the 9th century A.D. is a noteworthy example. The same traditions are found continued in the sculptures of Nataraja of the subsequent periods also. Hardly a temple is there in Orissa which does not contain a fine Nataraja figure in it.

One more region remains to be examined before we turn to the southernmost region of India, which, without fear of exaggeration may be termed as "the Stage" for the Lord to be dancing eternally his myriad dances. It is Andhradesa. Though famous for its preservation of the

culture characterised by *Sanatanadharma*, it became a stronghold of Buddhism very early due to the exemplary catholicity and tolerance shown by the rulers of the early royal dynasties, the Satavahanas, the Ikshavakus and others that ruled over this area. But from about the beginning of the 4th century A. D., royal families having definite leanings towards Hinduism became the rulers of this country of whom mention must be made of the Salankayanas and Vishnukundins. That they were devout Hindus and Saivite in persuation is known not only from their inscriptions but definitely from their crest which was a couchant bull (*nandi*). Unfortunately, however, not many vestiges of the material culture belonging to the time of these rulers have come down. The interesting group of rock-cut caves occurring in such places as Bhairavakonda and Mogalrajapuram near Vijayawada are, however, attributed to the Vishnukundin rulers of about the 6th century A. D. Some of these caves contain bas-relief sculptures of exquisite workmanship. Of these caves, the one at Mogalrajapuram contains a marvellous bas-relief representation of Nataraja (Fig. 8) above its cornice. It is now unfortunately in a very badly mutilated condition. Yet the parts that remain speak volumes about its original grandeur. It is dated to about the 6th century A. D. and hence is one of the earliest representations of Nataraja, perhaps slightly earlier than even the Badami Nataraja. In this instance, unlike the instances of Nataraja so far noticed, Siva, eight-armed dances on Apasmarapurusha in the pose called *bhujangatrasa* which, with some modification, is the pose of the Nataraja most familiar to us. So it is the earliest example in respect of this also.

Subsequently the Andhra country came to be ruled over by the kings of the famous Eastern Chalukya dynasty for nearly five centuries. Their reign was also marked by tolerance towards all faiths. The temples built during this period contain beautiful icons Nataraja in the *lalita* or *catura* pose. Subsequently no temples of any consequence appear to have been erected in this part. Consequently the sculptures belonging to this period are also few. The few Nataraja sculptures amongst them continue the same old type.

But it was in Tamil Nad that the Nataraja theme found its supreme expression in art. The story will be narrated in the subsequent issues of this journal.

INDIAN PAINTING

THE MODERN PHASE

By KRISHNA CHAITANYA

THE tradition of painting which swept back to 2,000 years with the first murals of Ajanta came to an apparent close towards the end of the 19th century in India.

The last efflorescence of traditional painting was witnessed in the historical Trigartha or Three Valleys, of Himachal Pradesh. In these small principalities, built by Rajput clans from the plains in the foot-hills of the Himalayas, the idiom of Rajasthani painting had become yet more lovely, partaking of the cleanness of mountain air and the limpidity of mountain streams. Painting in Kangra, Basohli, Suket, Mandi, Chamba and other places declined with the decline of patronage and in 1905 the earthquake at Dharamsala brought physical ruin to the art of this region.

A hybrid type of painting carried on the tradition of portraiture of the nobility, and influenced by Westernism, lingered on in many places in India. At Lucknow and Patna and in the South at Tanjore and Mysore, competent portraiture continued to be executed. But of the great lyricism of Pahari painting there was no trace left.

In 1854, under the very strong impact of foreign culture, the Calcutta School of Art came into existence. The school looked for its inspiration to Britain and it was a tragedy for the country that during this period British art was at a low ebb, unable to distinguish between stodginess and academic solidity. Impure ideals vitiated English art and through it, early art training in India.

Amid the number of mediocre personalities belonging to this phase, one man stands out with considerable claims to solid achievment, though in a limited field. This man was Ravi Varma. Later, the Renaissance painters of Bengal, as well as the modernists of the next generation, were to look down upon him—for different reasons. But the fact remains that Ravi Varma retained that respect for drawing which is not one of the most conspicuous traits of the younger moderns and also did not lean heavily on the literary appeal of themes to sell his pictures. It is true that he illustrated numerous legends from the *Puranas*, but they were invariably competently executed as regards drawing and colouring. His exacting scrupulousness, if not his originality, should be a legacy to posterity.

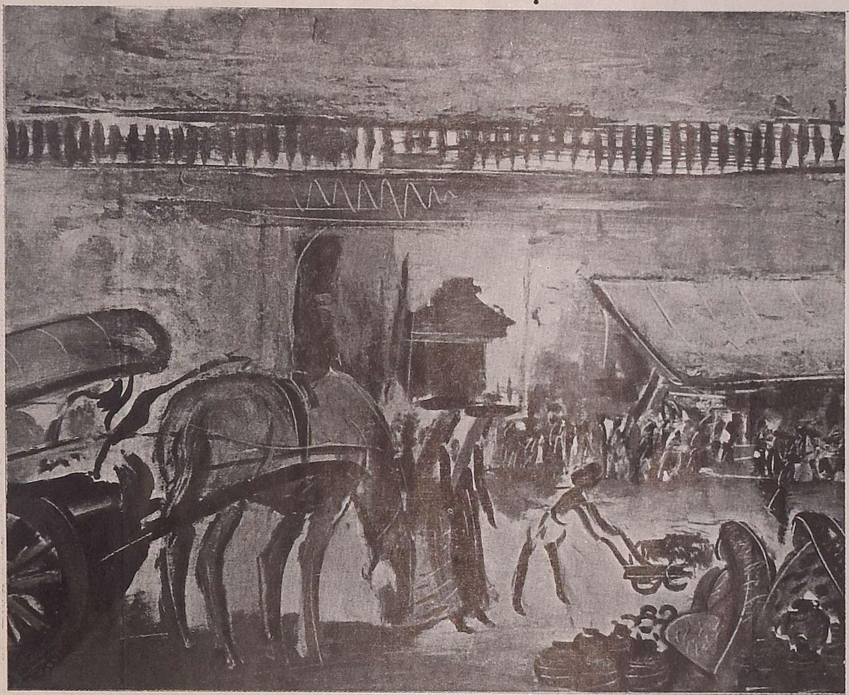
Against the weighty background of British imperialistic designs in India, it is heartening to recollect that two Englishmen nearly made amends for the great injury to indigenous culture which foreign conquest meant. These men were Lord Curzon and E.B. Havell. Curzon was struck by the great architectural and sculptural heritage of this country and enacted legislation for their preservation. Havell, who was the Principal of the Calcutta School of Art, realized the tragic futility of inducing Indian artists to copy an alien idiom while they had such a variety of precious heritage of their own. He advocated, therefore, a study of traditional achievements. Abroad, the philosophical background of the revival was discussed and made known to an international public with profound scholarship by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy. In India, a group of young painters, led by Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, gave body and substance to Havell's pleas by dedicating themselves to an earnest study of Ajantan, Rajput and Mughal masterpieces. Thus was the revival of painting ushered in.

REVIVALIST MOVEMENT

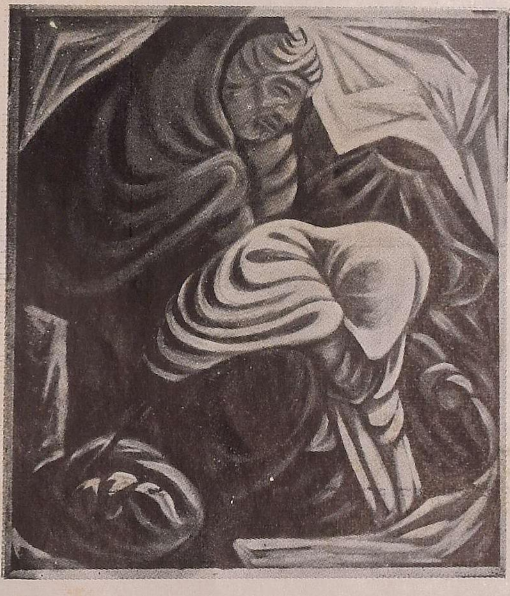
In evaluating the revivalist outlook, the historian should not forget its deep social roots. During the Counter-Reformation in the West when Catholic Europe was trying to regain the old energy in the face of Protestant onslaughts we find the great painter El Greco, deliberately adopting the intense quality and the peculiar idiom of the Christian paintings of the catacombs, the product of a crisis in Christian history, when they were living amidst a powerful and alien Roman world. Confronted with a political conquest which was fast maturing into a cultural conquest, it is not surprising that the artists of the revival sought a passionate inspiration in the flawless art of the great periods of Indian history.

The artists of the revival gave up Western values like correct realization of perspective, emphasis on verisimilitude and adopted a poetic and evocative manner. In the matter of technique also, the artists abandoned European methods of oil painting and returned to water colour. The revolt was against the West, not against all foreign influences. For example, Chinese and Japanese styles of painting were very carefully studied. The calligraphic quality of the line in revivalist painting is to a certain extent taken over from Chinese painting while Japan has influenced the technique of giving repeated washes for achieving a subtle quality of colour and tonal harmony.

Their intense mood has passed away along with its historical justification. But the historian of art will always note with gratitude that



'Market Place'—Sailoz Mookerjea (From the Collection of Miss Elizabeth Robb.)



'Sermon on the Mount'—Satish Gujral, from his one-man show held recently in New Delhi.

Rain in Almora

Pran Nath Mago

the energy for rekindling art activity all over India radiated from the Revival. It was the Old Guard which supplied teachers to almost all the important art schools of the subcontinent. Nandalal Bose taught at Santiniketan ; D.P. Roy Chowdhury became Principal of the Madras School of Art ; Venkatappa trained many young Mysoreans ; Promode Kumar Chatterjee taught in Andhra-desha ; Sailen Dey taught at Jaipur ; Asit Kumar Haldar became the Principal of the Lucknow School of Art and Mukul Dey of the Calcutta School of Art, while Sarada Charan Ukil drew Delhi into the orbit of the reawakening by founding the Ukil School of Art in the Capital.

Meanwhile, a more cosmopolitan trend was emerging in Bombay as is understandable in the case of a port in contact with various regions of the world through the great shipping lines. The Bombay School of Art did not believe in specialising in the wash technique because it felt that the student should be given training in all media and styles so that he can let the theme guide the choice of style. Life classes were thus started for the students of the Bombay School as early as 1919. But Bombay also was aware of the great decorative tradition native to the land and therefore they also started a special class of Indian decorative painting. When nostalgia gradually disappeared with time from revivalist painting and when Bombay continued its research in the decorative idiom, the gulf which separated them originally became narrower. Calcutta also produced great exponents of the Western type of representationalism in the case of artists like Hemen Mazumdar, Jamini Gangoly, Atul Bose and others. Today it can be safely stated that no style has a specific geography.

THE RADICALS

Meanwhile, insinuating between the heavily literary manner of the revivalists and the very academic representationalism of the moderns of those days, there emerged a radical movement in Indian painting. Gaganendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy, and Amrita Sher-Gil are the four great pioneers of Indian radicalism. Without any regular schooling in art and therefore free from preoccupations with technique, Rabindranath Tagore adopted a style of free expressionism, letting his brush move under the guidance of sub-conscious impulses. His lines and colours have a mysterious suggestive power carried up from the depths of his personality. Technically more advanced, G.N. Tagore was a great experimenter, attempting cubism, studying the role of light in painting and accepting social reality as his theme. Amrita Sher-Gil attempted a profound synthesis of the more enduring elements in Western and Indian painting. She managed to evolve a simple yet intense idiom, which has influenced a host of younger painters.

The Revivalists had salvaged the aristocratic traditions of the past. There was another—a rich and vital folk tradition—which had to await the advent of Jamini Roy. Today the nation accepts not only its princes and emperors, but also its poor relations. Motifs of folk art have the great virtues of simplicity, refreshing colour, direct emotional impact. Roy enriched this inheritance by taking over the classical purity of line of Picasso's "Greek" period reinforced often by the use of a single colour and in many other fascinating ways. His vigorous, coherent statement of form mediates today between the younger artists like Sunil Paul and Sitesh Das Gupta and the folk art tradition to which they turn for inspiration.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

The assessment of the contemporary scene is difficult because of the wide range of tendencies it exhibits. There has been a chastened prolongation of the renaissance idiom. Divested of its morbidity which had often led to unpleasant exaggerations of style, the renaissance manner survives today, content to evolve purely decorative effects. Two legacies have been left by renaissance painting which are of great value to contemporary decorative art: the melodic beauty of line and the appeal of delicately blended tonalities.

The new political context, after independence, has resulted in greater possibilities of internationalism in Indian art. There is an element of frustration in the back wash of all revolutions. And that could be good at times, as for instance, when it leads to a more objective appraisal of the qualities of other nations. Though artists and critics both frequently get themselves tied up into knots in controversies over borrowing suggestions, the younger artists have quietly gone ahead hunting up affinities, tripping up badly on occasions, but on the whole succeeding remarkably well in assimilating various influences and producing a modernistic art.

The far flung nature of this net-work of stumuli can be made clear by some random examples. Y.K. Shukla's *Fish* comes to us from Chinese seas and some of Masoji's landscapes recall Sung work. Pran Nath Mago comes under the seductive influence of the Japanese master, Hiroshige, in his *Rain in Almora* and Paritosh Sen in his *Birdseller* goes back to the ancient frescoes of Egypt.

Coptic art has influenced Makhan Dutta Gupta's studies of Christians from the southern lands and the influence of Aztec art is very much evident in Subho Tagore's work. The revolutionary art of Newton and Gujral has fed with Gargantuan appetite on the work of the Mexicans,

Orozco and Diego Rivera, and the great Frenchman, Rouault. Van Gogh and Gauguin have had many followers. An example of the fruitful synthesis to which correct assimilation can lead is furnished by the art of Sailoz Mookerjea, where French and Rajput elements blend and undergo a sea-change into things of exquisite taste.

The difference between academism and radicalism is not the same thing as the difference between stodginess and brilliance. Academism ends up in stodginess only when the solid workmanship, which is its first preference, is not backed up by inspiration. When it has that backing it comes to incarnate myriad, ageless beauties. Conversely, when a flame-like intensity of inspiration is lacking in radical attempts their structural weakness and slightness of total impact begin to show up. Anyway, the present neurotic age has no time for patient construction. So we find the various elements of classical architectonics dissolving and being independently pursued.

The impact of the West emancipated the landscape which was a mere back-drop to the play of tender human sentiments in the Nayika and Radha Krishna paintings of the Rajput schools, but it is rarely that one sees ambitious constructions which can equal a Constable or a Poussin.

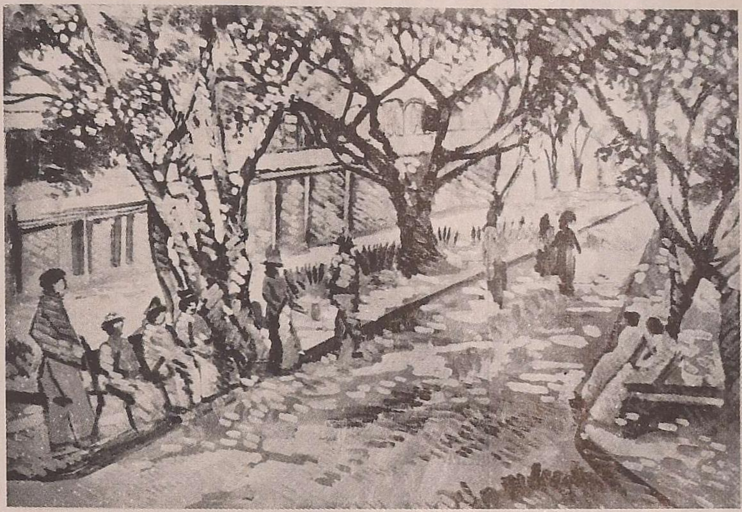
Rhythm is another minor deity who has broken loose from the general pantheon and has started demanding adoration on her own rights. In Sudhir Khastgir it expands into distended patterns, which reflect, for example, the climax of ecstasy in dancing figures. Slower and more controlled in its undulations, the line in Hebbar conserves volumes planned to fit in with each other as an ensemble. Hugging the enclosed volumes loosely, ungainly at first sight and attractive at second, the line in Rathin Maitra gains beauty by patterned repetition. Deliberately brittle and stuccato, it develops an explosive nervous energy in Gopal Ghose. And so—as we may judiciously put it—on.

Expressionism has not found great favour with Indian painters. But we have at least one painter who has to be taken seriously—Maqbul Fida Hussain. Mosaic in its psychological import, his presentation condenses many memories, held together by masculine violence rather than by feminine harmony and delivering its cryptic message with a finality that has to be respected, though it cannot often be loved. Amrita Sher-Gil had known the secret of using pure blacks and pure whites for rich aesthetic expression. Hussain has taken over the formula from her.

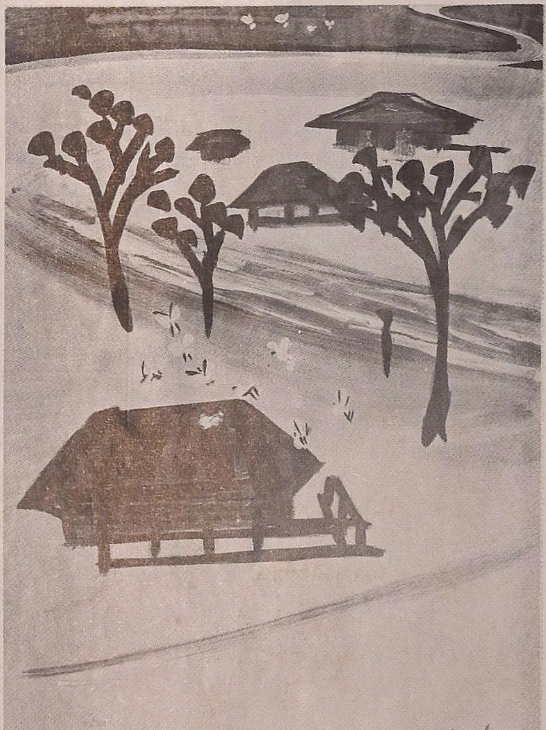
The most important problem facing contemporary painting is the question of derivatives. There is a general realization that imitation of

Ajantan and other art forms of the past does not lead to real intense self-expression today. And some of the younger painters are violently hostile to this practice. But the issue is not so simple as all that. For many of these modernists think it legitimate to imitate extensively the contemporary painters of Europe. If one finds a young artist, probably a very young artist, doing a Christ in the manner of Rouault and finds, further, that he is staking his all on his originality, the confusion can only be described as thorough. The possibility that the artist independently discovered the validity of the mediaeval idiom for reflecting the crisis and anguish of modern civilization and therefore is as much a pioneer as Rouault, can be ruled out be having one straight look at the artist instead of his painting. The younger radicals of today have to learn to distinguish between assimilation and imitation and this is going to be much more difficult than they imagine.

The present is a transitional phase in the history of Indian art. Tradition has dissolved on the surface, but lives in innumerable concealed prolongations. Dissolving cultural frontiers have brought strange merchandise from afar to which our men are learning to traffic with increasing aptitude. Given a fair measure of sincerity on the part of the artist and the critic we can be optimistic about the future.



'Midday rest'—Paritosh Sen



'Scarlet Grove'
Gopal Ghose

Stone image of Ganga, with Purna kumbha in hand, Mahanad, Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal, Sena Period. C. 12th Century A.D.

The two recently acquired Sculptures in the National Museum of India.

Bronze Figure of Buddhist Tara in Varadamudra.

A FIGURE OF GANGA AND A BRONZE TARA IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

By
A. K. BHATTACHARYYA
Deputy Keeper
National Museum of India, New Delhi.

THE National Museum has been recently enriched by the acquisition by the present writer of a stone sculpture of Ganga and a bronze figure of the Buddhist goddess Tara. These pieces form a part of the collection of Shri P.C. Paul of Mahanad in the district of Hooghly and have been presented to the Museum by him. These have been displayed in the medieval bay of the galleries of the Museum along with a few other objects acquired from the same region.

The district of Hooghly with its ancient sites of Saptagram, Mahanad and Triveni, was the cradle of Brahmanism, and to a certain extent, Buddhism. In lower western Bengal traces of Jainism and Buddhism are available and during the Palas their cultural influence was certainly felt even beyond the immediate borders of their political jurisdiction. During this time and subsequently, the bronzes of Nalanda bear unmistakable marks of Javanese influence and vice-versa, born out of cultural contacts between the two countries.

Bronze Figure of Buddhist Tara—(Fig. 1.) ht. 11 cm. ; Ac. No. 55.11—Tara or Syama-Tara is in importance and popularity perhaps second only to Avalokitesvara. The right hand in *varadamudra* (pose of offering gift) and the left hand holding the stalk of the lotus, constitutes the typical iconography of the figure, the lotus here being, however, a full-blown one and not a half-closed blue lotus (*utpala*). The flamed halo, oval in shape, with a surmounting top-decoration in elongated triangular design with the goddess seated on a double-lotus, is clearly reminiscent of the Pala school as at Nalanda. This specimen, although recovered from Mahanad in Hooghly district, bears close semblance to the Buddhist art in bronze as it flourished in Nalanda during the 9th-11th centuries A.D. According to Kempers,[1] who has made special study of Nalanda bronzes, the images of this well-known goddess in the Buddhist pantheon are rarer in Hindu-Javanese bronze collections. One very good specimen exists in the Batavia Museum showing the usual *varadamudra* and the *utpala*. A similar image from Tjandi Djago now in the British Museum has an inscription "*Bharali Mamaki*', the latter term according to Dr. Krom being equivalent to Tara.

1. *The Bronzes of Nalanda and Hindu-Javanese Art* by Bernet Kempers, p. 40.

The only figure of Tarą in the Leyden Museum bears close similarity to Pala art.[2]

The present image with the hair arranged in a top-knot and a *tiara* on the forehead has typical ornaments of the Pala bronze figures. The face of the figure is flat and roundish recalling the Javanese type. The image wears *karnapura, kundala, kanthahara,* a torque, *keyura, nupura* and a thick girdle or *kanchi*. The upper part of the body has traces of a close fitting garment with the lower part draped up to the ankle from the waist. The upper garment is a bodice which clearly marks it out for a piece from Bengal since the usual typical Nalanda upper dress consisted of an *uttariya* rather than a bodice which is peculiar to Bengal. The full-blown frontal lotus that she holds has a tender stalk ending in a pair of leaves encasing the flower. The double lotus on which the image sits in *lalitasana* is set on a high pedestal in the usual style of the Pala School. More than usual the right hand in the *varadamudra* has a gift held out in it.

Thus, while the main frame-work remains of the style of Nalanda, carrying with it the influence of Javanese art, the stamp of the Bengal school of bronze, as developed in the 8th-9th century, is clearly discernible. Although it is true that Bengal developed much more terracotta figure-mouldings, bronze came to arrest local attention to a certain extent, particularly in the wake of the Buddhist king Dharmapala, who probably built the Vihara at Paharpur in 8th century A. D. The bronze image of Manjusri from Mahasthan, in fact, is a clear proof of the popularity of the art of bronze in Bengal from very early times. Mahasthan or ancient Paundravardhana was visited by Hiuen-Tsiang in the 7th century, who noted it to be a living centre of Buddhism. It seems, therefore clear, that the Nalanda bronzes that bore the stamp of Javanese art, must have extended the sphere of their influence far deep into lower and eastern Bengal perhaps through the Buddhist north. In these the strength and heaviness of the features is a special characteristic that introduced itself in the contemporary art in the early Pala period.

Stone sculpture of Ganga (Fig. 2)—ht. 51 cm. Ac. No. 55.9—During the Sena period sculptural art in Eastern India reached a height of fineness and delicacy never surpassed. It can compare favourably with Gupta art which was marked, however, with a greater restraint in form, dress and ornamentation. With the decline of the Pala empire which began in the 10th century, the artist for a time appears to be in frantic efforts to maintain the standards of the great art of older days and the

2. *Ibid*, p. 41, f. n. 1.

result was a marked drift towards arid stylization. This stylization in Bengal sculptures received a timely check at the hands of Sena revivalists. With the great resurgence of Saivism in eastern India, followed by Vaishnavism, Bengal sculptural art once more found itself in full form both as regards its theme and in its refined expression. Sena art of Bengal in a way combined in itself all the delicacy of Gupta art, but with a greater touch of sensuality[3]. The form is full and soft, the ornamentation heavy but effective and the study in expression and proportion superb.

The present figure in *abhanga* wears a *mukuta* formed by a double *tiara* in semi-circular formation surmounted by a circle of five jewels with a central one. The fluttering ribbons on the two sides set behind the side-jewels of the head (*parsva-ratnas*). have delicacy and a subtle touch of movement. The *patrakundalas* are jewelled at the circumference and the braid of hair to the left is carefully tied with an ornamented fillet. The characteristically folded ends of the upper and lower garments carved out in full relief indicate workmanship of a very high order, although it is nothing short of confirmed stylization. The fully developed and pressing breasts partly covered with finely carved *hara* placed on the diaphanous apparel answer the classic description of a young woman's charms in Kalidasa's *Kumara Sambhavam* where the full breasts of Parvati are stated not even to allow the slender thread of the lotus stalk between themselves. The folds of the upper garment and a scarf underline the torso and indirectly emphasize the fulness and delicacy of the form. The figure wears a torque which has a central square *phalaka* set in the middle of a beaded double course. A long necklace which also adorns the torso marks the elevation of the breasts with a sensuous symmetry. The goddess also wears a third flowing necklace in the fashion of the *upavita* which in its long and tortuous course shows the curves and undulations of the female form and seems endowed with a dynamicity that suggests the rhythmic movement of the figure. The hanging central pendant from the waist-band (*mekhala*) caught in its sidewise swing affords an artistic expression of the lively gait of the celestial river-deity with her left foot put forward suggesting the perennial motion symbolic of the eternal current of the stream. The deity has her *chelanchala*, the ends of the silken garment, tied in a knot with the flowing parts displaying the design.

The figure stands on a full-blown lotus and carries the full-jar (*purna-kumbha*) holding it in her two hands and has a blossoming tree

3. In fact, there are evidences, e.g. in the Vishnu image discovered by N.G. Majumdar in the Malda district and the figure of Buddha discovered at Biharoil in the district of Rajshahi, that as late as the end of the 7th century, "the artists of Bengal were followers of the decadent Gupta style of the school of Pataliputra". *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture* by R.D. Banerjee, p. 3.

above head. The iconography for the riverine goddess, Ganga (or equally possibly Yamuna) is complete except for the conspicuous absence of the *vahana, makara*. While the *purna-kumbha* is held in the slightly tilted position, the left hand is in the characteristic pose suggesting *dhara* or pouring water out of the pot. In the definitely Gupta shrines, the river-goddesses, as almost inevitable motifs on door-jambs, find a conspicuous place on the level of the lintel. But while they are almost invariably attended with their vehicles, the *makara* and the tortoise, a few examples do exist where independent figures of the river-deities are sculptured on doorways without the *vahanas*. At Udayagiri in Madhya Bharat on the doorway of the Chandragupta cave, dated in 401-2 A.D., the figures of Ganga and Yamuna are not attended by the vehicles[4]. Here the absence of the *vahana, makarà*, is easily explained by the sculpture being meant for a bracket figure or more probably as side attendant to a central figure, *e.g.*, of a *Nataraja*. In fact, it appears more as one of a pair of two symmetrical miniatures that keep balance for a central larger one. It is, in other words, one of what is known in art as 'Symmetria Trisca' *i e.* Symmetrical Composition. Further, here and elsewhere as in the Udayagiri cave and in the Tigowa sculptures and the figure from Besnagar, now in Boston Museum[5], the image is figured beneath trees, the composition in the latter being much in the *salabhanjika* fashion. In fact, it has been suggested[6] they were originally tree-spirits, similar to yakshis, and metamorphosed into river-deities later. The association of such figures with the tree overhead as a part of the *salabhanjika* composition is also a common motif in ancient Indian art which continued uninterrupted down into the late medieval period. Figures of women in association with trees continued to signify the motif of the simple *salabhanjika* where the naturally associated ideas of beauty and blossoming or procreation are common in both and seem to add effect mutually to each other's character. Here, in the present instance of the figure of Ganga, the tree in the background is shown as fully blossomed and probably represents *asoka* or *raktasoka*. The tree with its blossoms, however, is so arranged as to shape itself into a natural halo necessary for indicating the divinity of the figure. That she should stand under a tree is borne out by a few other images of this goddess. The stone image of Ganga from Tigowa[7], Jubbulpore district, Madhya Pradesh is a single figure of the same deity, where she is depicted as standing under a custard-apple tree[8]. Here in the present figure as in that on the door-jamb from a Siva temple at Kharod in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh, the deity holds the *purna-kumbha*, although in

4. V. A. Smith : *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 79.
5. *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* by A. K. Coomaraswamy, fig. 177.
6. *Ibid., loc. cit.*
7. P1. CLV, fig. 1, T.A.G. Rao, Vol. 2, p. 531.
8. Cunningham's Reports, Vol. IX, p. 46.

the Sena sculpture both the hands of the deity are occupied with the ***kumbha*** while it is not so in the other case.

In Bengal figures of a late period (Sena period) she is more of an attendant to Siva than an independent goddess, though she is also sculptured independently. In the present specimen her being an attendant deity to a central figure, such as that of Siva in ***tandava*** is more probable[9]. The figure of Nataraja from Ballala Badi at Rampal district Dacca, now in East Pakistan, datable to the Sena period has an attendant figure of Ganga on the left with almost similar features, specially with regard to ornaments, head-dress and facial expression. Iconographically, however, our present figure comes nearer the attendant figure of Ganga in the two Nataraja images from Tippera and Dacca districts respectively, figured on pl. XLV of the Dacca Museum Catalogue in that these figures hold a ***purna kumbha*** in their left hands. In fact, Saivism, as already said, was in ascendancy once more in the Sena period of Bengal and Ganga as the second wife of Siva with all her playful courses in the great ***jata*** has found mention more than once in poetic eulogy in the contemporary lithic and metallic records of the dynasty[10]. Here on the banks of the river, the Brahma-Kshatriya Sena clan of the South settled in the time of Samanta Sena[11] and here in her bewildering waters the sports of Ganesa and Kartikeya offer an occasion for Siva's joy at the scene[12]. An image of this riverine deity, therefore, all by itself is but an expected expression not only of the creative art of the period but an embodiment of a tradition of the royal house and current religious symbolism.

9. N. K. Bhattashali : *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, p. 113, p. XLIII.
10. Cf. Deopara inscn. of Vijayasena, *Epigraphia Indica*, I, p. 3 & 5 ff. v. 3 ; Barrackpore Copper-plate inscn. of Vijayasena, *Ibid.*, XV. p. 278, v. 1 ; Naihati copper plate of Ballala Sena, *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 156, V. 6 etc.
11. Deopara inscn. V. 9.
12. Barrackpore copper-plate, V. 1.

DANCES OF MANIPUR

By SHRIMATI SRIMATI TAGORE

DANCING in Manipur is intimately connected with the religious life of its people. Its older varieties are woven round the mythological figures of Shiva and Parvati. Later on, with the advent of Vaishnavism, the legend of Radha-Krishna became a popular theme. There are four main dance forms in Manipur: Laiharoba, Astra-Vidya, Chalan-Gathan and Rasa-Lila.

The Laiharoba is the oldest form of dance known in Manipur. It means the festival of gods and it is in the form of a dance-drama. The theme is similar to the play staged on the occasion of Indra's flag hoisting festival described in Bharata's Natya Shastra. At present only two minor types—the "Mairang Laiharoba" and the "Umang Laiharoba" are seen. Every year in the months of Chaitra and Vaisakha (April-May) a big dance festival is held in the village Mairang in front of the Thangjing temple. A large number of men and women take part in this festival which lasts for seven to ten days. The dance-drama is composed of solo, duet and group dances depicting stories from the "Mairang Parba"—a great Manipuri epic. These stories are woven round the hero Khamba and the heroine Thaibi believed to be incarnations of Shiva and Parvati. The Khamba-Thaibi dances are simple: their rhythm, movements, and expressions are rather unvaried and bordering on the primitive. But the group dances in which as many as a hundred or more usually participate hold vivid and vigorous appeal with their colourful costumes and powerful vibrations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 'LAIHAROBA'

The original form of the Laiharoba is now almost a forgotten art. But for the efforts of Guru Surya Bara Singh, who was a teacher of great sensibility and scholarship, this classical dance would not have become known outside Manipur. Based on Bharata's Natya Shastra, Laiharoba evolved a character of its own with a distinct Manipuri touch especially in the graceful and sinuous movements of the arms and hands and in the basic posture of the body. The latter is neither the knee-bend of "Bharata Natyam", nor the erect pose of "Kathak". The 'karanas' (physical gestures) are well-defined and lucidly interwoven into the 'Angaharas' (basic physical postures). 'Kathak' is usually danced in 'trital', 'jhaptal', 'ektal' etc., while

'Bharata Natyam' is generally danced in 'adi-rupak misram', and other 'tals'. On rare occasions only is a 'dhrupad tal' danced. Guru Surya Bara Singh's dance compositions included besides 'trital' 'ek-tal', 'jhap-tal', and 'rudra-tal', such 'dhrupad tals' as the 'chautal', 'ada-chautal' and 'dhammar'. They revealed the great wealth of Manipur's classical dance heritage.

This classical art was also practised by the Deva Dasis, who were once attached to the temple and were the real repositories of this highly technical and refined art tradition. It is a great pity that, with the inflow of Vaishnavism in the country, this classical form became neglected and all but forgotten. Though rarely seen now, an exposition of this classical art would reveal the superlative skill required to execute its foot-work, restrained gestures and sculpturesque poses, which may well be compared with that which is best in the classical dances of India.

ASTRA-VIDYA AND KIRTANA DANCES

The Astra Vidya is another ancient form of this art which comprises all kinds of acrobatic dances. There are sword and spear dances, mock fights and war dances which call for great agility and supple strength to be acquired only after years of training. In olden days it was almost compulsory for men to learn these dances. Women also, sometimes practised them. Even today one may come across old women who are fine exponents of the art.

The special occasion for these dances is the *Kwak-Tanba—i.e.* 'Ravan-killing' which falls during the Durga Puja festival. Mock-fights, sword and spear dances and other acrobatic dances are in great demand on many festive occasions also.

The *Chalan-Gathan* marks the advent of Vaishnavism in Manipur. It is truly a Kirtana-dance in which, 'manjira', 'Karatala' and 'khol'—the Manipuri 'mridanga'—constitute important accessories. A party of men each with a 'manjira' or 'Karatala' form into a semicircle, two 'khol' players stand at both ends while the leader of the party takes the central position.

The Manipuri's have good physique and their costume—spotless 'dhoti', 'uttariya' and 'pagri'—is simple and impressive. After the preliminary 'alap' or introduction to a *Raga*, the leader strikes the first note on his 'manjira' or 'Karatala' and begins a movement which the rest of the dancers take up. Singing the 'Kirtana', playing on the 'manjiras' with slow graceful steps and turns, the dancers move to and fro to the accompaniment of the resounding 'khol'. In between the slow rhythmic

movements, the leader comes forward and gives a display of a series of quick and intricate foot-patterns and striking postures.

In the *Chalan-Gathan* we find the classical techinque still preserved and practised to a certain extent. The tempo rises, the 'manjiras' resound in unison and now the 'khol' players take the field. Leaping and bending, whirling and twisting, they dance and play on the 'khol' with a gusto which reaches a climax at once elevating and exhilarating.

THE RASA-LILA

The *Rasa-Lila*, the most popular of the dances, is also the principal dance of Manipur. Intimately connected with Vishnavism, the *Rasa-Lila* runs through the whole gamut of Sri Krishna's *lila* in a series of songs and dances. In the *Bhagavat Purana*, the *Rasa* is described as a drama in five acts composed of dialogues, songs and dances. The major action of this drama is in terms of dance movements. The *Rasa* is, therefore, traditionally known not as a drama but as a dance. The elaborate dances supported by songs delineate the various phases of the drama. They are arranged in several stages which progressively contribute and lead up to the finale—the supreme union in the 'maharas'.

To a large extent, the Manipuri Rasa follows the *Bhagavat* traditions. 'Kunja' , 'Vasanta' , 'Maha' and 'Nitya' are four main 'Rasas'. Seasonal in character, the first three are exclusively held during the months of Aswin, Vaisakha and Kartika respectively, while 'Nityarasa' can be performed at any time of the year and on any festive occasion. The 'Rasa-lila' festivals are generally held under the patronage of the court or some leading local personage. Celebrated musicians, both men and women, are invited to take part in the festivals which to the Vaishnavas are of great religious significance. Well-known dance teachers are engaged to train the girls in *Rasa* dances and prepare them for the occasion.

To the devotees of Sri Krishna, the *Rasa* festivals are really rituals and their participants merit much spiritual grace. A special pandal called the 'Rasa-mandal' is erected for the festival which lasts from three to four weeks. The 'Rasa-mandal' is a circular structure enclosing an arena. Its central area is reserved for the performers and the audience sits all round. The orchestral accompaniment ordinarily consists of 'khol', 'manjira' and flute, though in recent years other stringed instruments are also sometimes included, alongwith, alas, the incongruous harmonium.

The costume is an important item in the production of a play. The conventional get-up of the Gopis is carefully designed with an emphasis on attractiveness and picturesqueness. It consists of a tight

fitting jacket, a stiff umbrella-shaped black or red skirt, over which a short white upper skirt (about 12 inches to 14 inches in length) falls from the waist in a beautiful frill. The head is covered with a tight fitting cone-shaped black cap. Over this a transparent veil of white muslin is worn. The whole costume is richly embroidered and greatly adds to the beauty of the dance. Krishna, the only male character in the play, wears a special head-dress, and a saffron coloured 'dhoti' and is brightly bejewelled.

The *Rasa* festivals begin with 'kirtans' and recitations from the *Gita Govinda*, the *Kalpataru*, the *Govinda Lilamrita* and other literary works. Next, the 'sutradhara', or the convener, explains the subject matter of the play and introduces the main characters to the auidence. The performance commences with a series of dances called 'Bhangi-Pareng' which is an invocation to Lord Krishna. There are five such series of dances, namely, 'Bhangi Pareng', 'Khuram Pareng', 'Brinnam' or 'Brindabali Pareng', 'Gostha Pareng' and 'Goshta Brinnan Pareng' composed by old masters. The first three of the series are 'lasya' while the last two are 'tandava' in character. The most important of these is 'Bhangi Pareng' without which no Rasa-lila dance is complete. It is danced in 'eka' and 'dui' 'tals' and lasts for about 30 minutes. Dancers move or rather glide in unison in slow swaying movements expressive of reverence. Every step, every movement, signifies the self-surrendering ecstasy of the devotees.

Rasa-lila dances awaken artistic visions of different scenes from the life of Sri Krishna. We see him now alone in the woods, in flute-beckoning attitude, now in rapturous partnership with Radha, now in the gay company of Gopis in different group-formations. In the 'Laghu-Rasa' the Gopis surround him in play. In the 'Maha-Rasa' they seek him here, there, and everywhere with the prayer in their hearts that he forsake them not; or they take the 'katyani' vow and he answers their prayer—and each of them dances a *pas-de-deux* with the Krishna of her dream-fulfilment ; or in the culminating passage they dance the flower—gathering and water-sport dances with Krishna as the central figure. Besides, there are lovely and lively spring dances and 'Abir-Khals' dances.

GOSHTA-LILA

The 'goshtashtami' is celebrated towards the end of the month of 'Kartika' with the 'Goshta-lila' dances. They are of the 'tandava' type. Some of them illustrate the story of Sri Krishna and the Gopa-boys. They approach Yasoda and supplicate her to let her Gopal play with

them, and away they go frolicking and dancing into the forest. In others, like the 'Kaliya-Daman' dance we see Krishna fighting and overpowering the forces of evil.

Every Manipuri dance on the Krishna theme, reveals in its progression the supreme love of the Lord for us mortals, his multiplicity of manifestations, his communion with his devotees and their consummating identification with him.

The dances of Manipur, classical or otherwise, are things of disciplined joy and power. They have rhythmical subtlety, slow suspense, speed, lyricism, drama. The parts of each dance are functionally interdependent ; and the whole is illumined by a beauty that transcends the suggestive allurements of more sensual grace. Profoundly they express the inwardness of life and love.

The Bhangi Pareng dance from the Manipuri Rasalila sequence.

Two more sequences from the Rasalila Dance

A still from the Children's Magazine issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The child reacts to a tense moment in a puppet play.

Another still from the Children's Magazine. A child watching a puppet show, registers appreciation.

CHILDREN'S FILMS

By SHRI K.M.R. MENON, New Delhi.

THE cinema has become a permanent and permeating feature of our life today. As a technical medium it is vital and limitless in its resources. Every day the resources are expanding with the discovery of new lenses, new film emulsions, new colour processes and new stereoscopic techniques. Slow and high speed photography have revealed to us the possibilities and beauties of the analysis of movement in nature. Cinemicrography makes visible things which are invisible to the naked eye. Infra-red photography helps us record happenings in the dark and ultra-violet photography enables one to look at blinding light without hurting the eye-sight. The mobility of the camera and the magnifying power of the lenses give it an extra-ordinary range of selection in securing the best angles of view of scenes and situations. Sound adds to its expressiveness and the technique of animation helps bring out even the most abstract ideas on the screen.

This powerful and incomparable instrument of education is also now potentially the greatest instrument of mass influence ever devised in the whole course of human cultural history.

There would have been nothing in this development to cause anxiety, if it had been used only or mainly to provide useful and healthy entertainment. But it must be sadly admitted that this has not been so and all over the world the cinema has brought in its wake a certain anxiety in those interested in the moral and spiritual well-being of humanity—an anxiety with regard to its unhealthy influences on society.

Thus, the question of educating the public to a better and more critical appreciation of films is a question of the mental health of nations. This is particularly so in India where the film has replaced most other forms of entertainment and street urchins, factory workers and other young wage-earners have no other form of relaxation or recreation. Such people, who comprise the larger part of the population and who have never been to school, who have no clubs, no games involving team work, have no group and social activities of any kind, come directly under the spell of the cinema. It is a great responsibility to ensure that this is good for them.

FAILURE OF CENSORSHIP

In this overwhelming responsibility, the first step in the right direction is the protection of the children of the country from the harmful effects of the cinema. Many countries of the world have realised the vital need of separating them from the rest of the cinema-going public. One of the ways this was sought to be done was by classifying films into different categories and prohibiting children's admission into cinemas showing certain types of pictures. The result has, however, proved far from encouraging. It is negative in nature and difficult to enforce in view of the important position cinema has come to occupy in our technological civilization. Children cannot be successfully kept out of it. The moment they become wage-earners or have enough pocket money saved up they will go there. It is a habit and there is no sense in not facing it. Bodies of censors have tried seriously to find solutions for this problem, none of them successful. After much careful experimenting and research, Russia, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and certain other countries tried making films specially designed for children. The success of this positive undertaking was immediate.

In Britain, the pioneering effort in the production of special films for children was made during the stress and agony of World War II, when the alarming increase of juvenile delinquency in the country rendered it necessary to find proper and useful diversion for children. The propaganda film proving a total failure, Mr. Arthur Rank of the British Film Industry, well-known for his religious fervour and missionary zeal in his work, was approached for helping in the solution of the problem. Working by trial and error method it was discovered that films with didactic bias could not succeed, that the emphasis should be on entertainment and that the inculcation of healthy principles and ideas for the flowering of the child's personality was to be achieved through healthy entertainment which would bring the child into close association with good example. Thus was "The Children's Entertainment Films" born. The organisation grew steadily, facing great practical difficulties and much adverse criticism. It did much useful work in the field of research, as regards child psychology, the fruits of which are available for other countries to follow.

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL NEEDS

Children are now recognised as a special kind of audience having their own special needs. The plots, characters and motives of films made for adults are all proved to be outside their range of experience. Either they are bored and irritated or they simply allow

their eyes to be amused and excited while their minds remain passive and blank. The latter undoes much of the training done in the school and at home and is considered harmful.

It is a mistake also to think that children's films should be directly educational. The home and the school are the right places for such education. The cinema must be primarily a means of entertainment. Good healthy entertainment is a kind of informal indirect education which helps the work of the parents and the teacher.

There are, according to Miss Mary Field, a few basic principles to be kept in view in the production of children's films. Children's pictures should deal with the adventures and achievements of children, adults playing a minor part. The stories should be clearly and directly told and children should be helped to follow the narrative by clear, well-planned camera work. There should be simple and carefully thought out dialogue and music. They require more close-ups than adults. And the story must rely for its interest more on actual pictures than on dialogue or commentary. Stories thus depicted can be understood by all children undisturbed by language or other barriers. "Thus" said Miss Mary Field, "children's films can be a most useful way of helping children towards international understanding, since through films they easily learn to like the children of other races and cultures than their own."

Today in free India we are acutely aware of our responsibility towards children, not only in the matter of protecting them from the bad effects on their minds of seeing unsuitable pictures, but also in providing them with alternative pictures that would help to make them righteous men and women and good citizens of the State. The need for this is probably greater here than in Europe or U. S.

As in other countries, restraints and taboos have proved to be too poor a substitute in our country for positive action in the shape of special production of films for children. We are now on the threshold of this new type of production. The trade itself may be said to have failed in this respect for no films have so far been made specially for the children except one or two. The very fact that the Central Committee of Awards could not find a single picture good enough for the Prime Minister's Gold Medal is eloquent of the sordid state of affairs.

Perhaps the industry is not wholly to blame. There are practical difficulties in commercial concerns producing children's films on

their own. In Britain, Mr. Arthur Rank was obliged to wind up his "Children's Entertainment Films" organisation in 1951, owing to the financial burden which its successful working involved, though the good work is still being carried on through a different agency called Children's Film Foundation, of which Miss Mary Field is the head.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

After due consideration and proper assessment of the lessons of other countries and our own, the Government have decided that in the matter of production of special films for children the initiative has to come from them. The Film Enquiry Committee's suggestion that the Films Division of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should undertake the task is considered not feasible in view of its already heavy production schedule. The Government, therefore, are of the view that the best agency for the project should be a society registered under the 1860 Societies' Registration Act, with adequate representation in it of cultural interests as well as the interests of the industry and the Government, so that the co-operation of all the three might be ensured. The object should be to take up the work of getting children's films—full length entertainment ones as well as short ones—produced through recognised producers in the country. The Society could procure suitable pictures for adaptation from abroad too. The main task, however, is to plan production with the help of members and experts, make arrangements for their production, to supervise the production at appropriate stages and finally to distribute them to cinemas.

In order to start the Society on its work and to strengthen it, the Government have decided to come forward with a liberal grant. To begin with grants for seven films have been announced; for the first feature film, the entire cost to be re-imbursed by the Government; for the second feature film and two short films, 75% of the cost; and for the third feature film and two more short films, half the cost.

Besides the films to be produced under the auspices of the Society, the available resources of the Government's Films Division will be utilised for the Children's Film Magazine, which has been started already and is expected to be made a regular feature. A cartoon unit is also being set up in the Films Division which will produce cartoons on Indian Folk lore like "Panchatantra", "Hitopadesha" and "Jataka" stories and suitable mythological themes and fantasies dear to the child's heart.

The Government grant, however, is to be considered a token grant and as an example of what can be achieved in this field. As Shri Manilal Shah, Union Minister, said in his inaugural address at the Children's

Film Festival on December 15, 1954, "Every parent should be interested in the facilities for providing healthy entertainment for children. Production of children's films is a field in which one can legitimately expect the public to contribute generously. The scheme envisaged by the Government is based on public participation."

The magnitude of the problem facing the Children's Films Society is as near baffling as any problem ever could be, in any country. The number of childern in India is over a hundred million, spread over a vast territory and speaking 14 different regional languages. To see to it that the films reach the doorstep of each child in each village is a task so formidable that the unstinted support of all public spirited citizens is not only necessary but of paramount importance.

Nothing has so far been done in our country even in the field of research into the reactions of child audiences. But for this the films have to be produced first. The Society will do well to have a Research Unit as they had in Britain. We can, of course, be guided to a large extent by the fruits of research made there and in countries like U. S. S. R., Czechoslovakia and Poland, which have much substantial pioneering work to their credit. But, it has to be remembered that we cannot rely on these alone, as the Indian social and psychological context is so different from theirs that not only adaptation but actual original research is demanded.

In Britain, at the initial stage, more than ten years ago, Arthur Rank had no precedent whatever to go upon in producing the first children's films. The Children's Entertainment Films formed an Advisory Council composed of representatives of Government Departments, Public Organisations interested in children's welfare and educationists. This Council was to supervise and scrutinise all the films produced, in all their aspects and through all stages of production. The final verdict on a film was always given only after seeing a film with a child audience. This was the most important check and one that avoided the risk of well-meaning people making such films as they think are good for them and actually are not. Mr. Rank's organisation set up a Research Department and reports of reactions of children were collected from managers of cinemas, who had been given training in mass psychology. Children's own views were also collected after being encouraged to express their frank unreserved opinion of the films they saw. Specifically prepared questionnaires were given to both, covering all aspects of film making. Spontaneous reactions of children were recorded also by photography on infra-red film. Besides, reports from other countries where the films were shown, were collected by the Research Unit. Our production programme should also be controlled by such careful checks.

THE CULTURAL TRADITION OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

By PRATAP KAPUR

New Delhi

THE Himachal Pradesh, a state integrated out of picturesque little principalities set up in the folds of the Himalayan ranges by warrior chieftains from the plains, some of the oldest off-shoots of the Aryan family and even pre-Aryan people have watched the cavalcade of centuries go by.

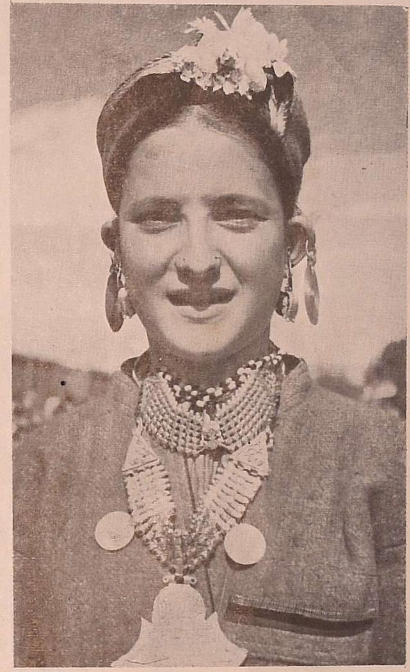
Among the monuments of ancient times are the temples, some of them said to be 1200 years old. These include the famous 'sikhar' type of temples of Bharmour. There are also some wooden temples in the Indo-Tibetan style. At Rewalsar, there is a Buddhist shrine with a large image of Padma Sambhava and frescoes on the walls. Another temple in Mandi contains a life-size three-faced stone image of Siva, with floral and animal carvings on the pillars and a trefoil arch typical of Mandi architecture that blends so harmoniously with the landscape. Another Triloknath temple, said to have been built in the 8th century, is in the north of Chamba, beyond Kilar. The three-foot high marble image of Triloknath is said to have been installed here by Padma Sambhava (750-800 A.D.) who went from India to Tibet with the message of the Buddha.

The Vaishnava revival in the rest of the country did not leave the lower western Himalayas untouched. In fact, it led to what may well be described as a glorious chapter in the cultural and artistic history of the region.

Jayadeva in particular had a specially strong influence in the area. By the 16th and 17th century, Jayadeva, Ramanand, Kabir, Tulsidas and the poets who wrote of the eight Nayikas and the Baramasa had prepared the way for the emergence of a new art which drew its inspiration from the Vaishnava cult, in which spiritual experience was symbolised in the relation between the lover and the beloved.

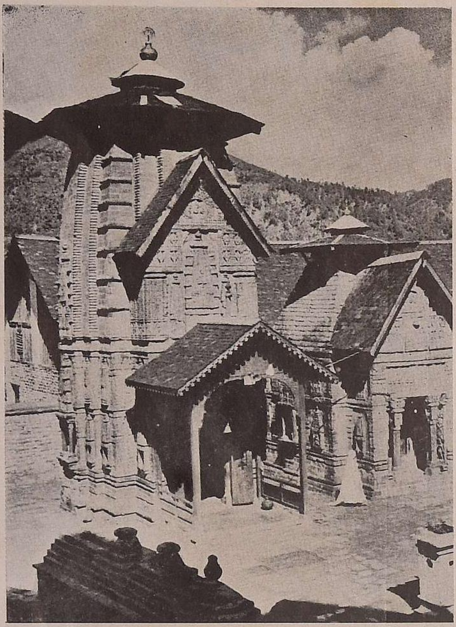
This is the basis of the Pahari school of painting which reached its greatest glories in the now world-famous Kangra style. The world of the spirit and the senses are interwoven. This is the key to the entire culture of the region—this essentially human character of the civilisation of Himachal. The Pahari paintings have their basis in the Rajput and Gujarat

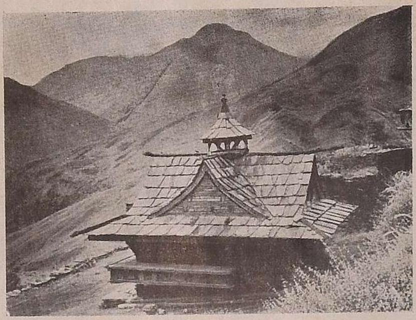
Horn blower from Himachal Pradesh.



A beauty from Himachal Pradesh

A folk-dance from Himachal Pradesh.

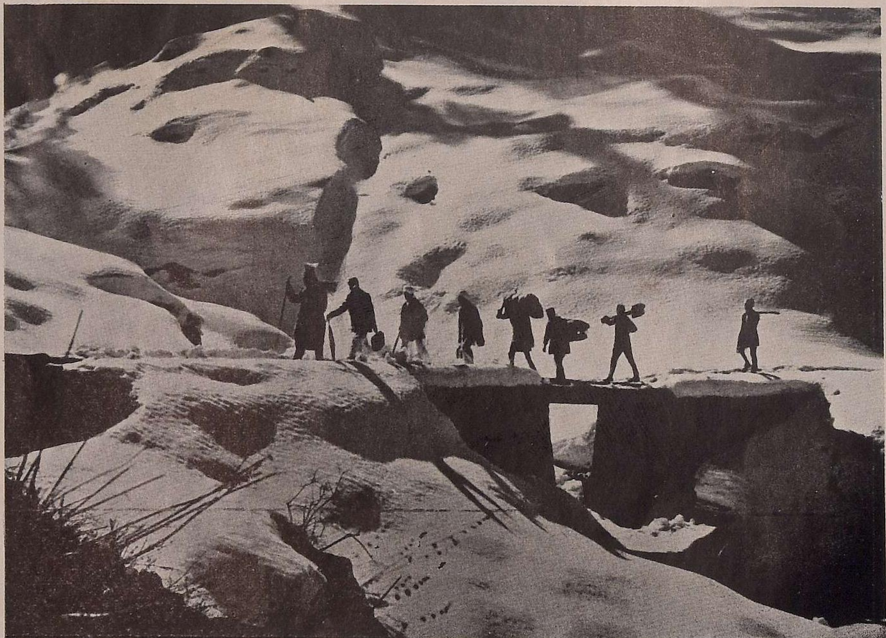




A temple in Chamba

A temple in Nogli

Winter snows do not arrest rhythm of life in Himachal Pradesh.



schools of painting. The motifs are influenced by the culture of the Punjab. The influence of the Sikh movement, which had freed the Punjabi from superstition and ritualism and broken the barriers of institutionalised priestly religion, is also unmistakable. Guru Gobind Singh, who chose Anandpur, a village in the foothills of the siwaliks for his residence has translated the legends of Rama and Krishna in powerful language and this had as deep an influence in the hills as in the plains. The patronage was provided by the Rajput princes.

From the original centres of Guler, Tira Sujanpur and Nurpur the Pahari school of painting spread into Mandi, Suket, Kulu, Garhwal and Chamba. "The romance of the epics and the Puranas", as one critic notes, "were here given a new life in voluptuous line and colour, the Krishna Lila with all its exotic symbolism was re-enacted by the painter's brush, the Siva-Parvati lore was invested with fresh colour and the lyrics of Kesavadas were given a new expression." Closely connected with the soil, the style has a spontaneity that rules out studied attitudes. It is in fact "nothing but music in colour".

Music is, indeed, in the very soul of these people and their folk tunes and songs have earned wide fame. The tunes undulate like the hills and as one goes by, one often hears the shepherd sing as he watches his flock, the housewife sing over her work. Music and song pervade every phase of life in Himachal. Broadly speaking, the tune follows the Pahari rag. Especially popular is the slow and poignant Jhanjhoti which is a favourite of exponents of classical music. It speaks for the inherent strength of the music of these people that even in the hands of exponents of classical music the Jhanjhoti has not lost its pure folk form. The themes are the same as in the paintings. There are songs about Siva and Rama and the loves of Krishna and Radha, besides the songs of the working class and the songs in praise of the local gods and goddesses. The pangs of lovers' separation are a common theme. The town of Simla also features in a number of songs. The songs are rich in symbols which are easily derived from the nature around, such as the pine tree for the lover.

With song goes dancing which is a living tradition in Himachal. The people sing and dance throughout the year in the courtyards of their houses. Shorn of rigid forms, the dance of Himachal reflects the joy of community life. Dancing also forms a part of the worship of the village deity. There are both solo and group dances. Of

the Tandava kind, the Prekshani is the most popular. There is not much of Lasya in the dances of Himachal, though some unconscious elements of it are to be found among women's dances, especially in the dances of the Bidhi Mata Festival. Humorous dances are provided by the Nats at the Nirshu, Bishur and Kariala festivals. There are two types of dancing: Nati which is danced by men and Yatra which is danced by men and women together.

There is a pronounced element of classical form in the folk dances of Himachal and this must have been brought by the Rajputs from the plains. But it is so interwoven with the local form that the dance stands in its own right. When the people dance, they go on from hour to hour. There are no facial expressions but only the intoxicating motion of the dance.

With the opening of the Simla Station of All India Radio in June 1955, a new link has been forged with the rich heritage of the past. The Simla Station has been specially equipped not only for studio broadcasts but for collecting programmes of folk songs and dances from the hilly tracts of Himachal Pradesh

MAURICE PRENDERGAST

figures in a landscape

(Exhibited at the American Water Colour Exhibition organised by the AIFACS in Delhi, Calcútta, Bombay and Madras in 1954-55)

A SURVEY OF HINDI LITERATURE

I. THE ANCIENT PERIOD

By Dr. DHIRENDRA VARMA

HINDI is one of the fourteen languages recognised by the Constitution of India. It has also been laid down in the Constitution that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. But we are not concerned here with this aspect of the language.

As a regional language, Hindi may be regarded to be the speech of these States of the Union : Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, a major portion of Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Rajasthan, Vindhya Pradesh, Bhopal, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and also eastern half of Punjab, having a total area of about 571,000 square miles and with about 17 crores of population. For the vast majority of the people of these States, Hindi is the language of literature, education, legislature and administration.

The Hindi region of the Union is thus bound linguistically by Punjabi in the west, Bengali in the east and Marathi in the South. The basin of the Ganges upto about Bhagalpur in the east may be regarded the homeland of regional Hindi. In ancient times, it was called Madhyadesh or Midland of Aryavarta or Northern India.

As the geographical extent of the Hindi area or Madhyadesha is very great, the masses use more than a dozen allied local dialects, each one of which is almost equally important, and is very rich in literary and folk traditions. Several of these were specially cultivated for more refined literary compositions in the medieval period. Under the general term Hindi Language all these spoken and literary forms of the Hindi area are included. Hindi literature thus comprises at least five main literary currents of Madhyadesha: Dingal or old Marwari, Braj Bhasha, Khari Boli, based on the dialect spoken in the vicinity of Delhi, Awadhi and Maithili. In a narrow sense Hindi sometimes means the Khari Boli only.

THE BEGINNINGS

The history of Hindi literature is usually divided into three main periods : Early (before 1400 A.D.), Medieval (from 1400 A.D. to 1800 A.D.) and Modern (from 1800 A.D. to the present times). The Early and Medieval Periods, both of which may be placed under the general term Ancient Period, are surveyed here.

It is difficult to fix the beginnings of Hindi literature. Scholars have variously suggested the eighth, tenth or twelfth centuries as the starting point. This difference of opinion is due to the fact that the earliest specimens of Hindi imperceptibly merge into Apabhranshas of the respective regions.

The Apabhransha literary traditions with which the earliest phases of Hindi language and literature are connected are mainly two: Jaina Literature written in Nagar Apabhransha of Western Rajasthan and Gujrat, and Siddha literature, written in Magadhi Apabhransha which was current in Bihar and Bengal. Attention towards the Jaina Apabhransha sources of Hindi literature was at first drawn by the late Pandit Chandradhar Sharma Guleri who called it Purani Hindi. Shri Rahul Sankrityayana proved the importance of Siddha literature for reconstructing the early history of Hindi literature.

It may be mentioned here that we find occasional use of local Apabhransha for literary composition upto the beginning of the Medieval Period. Vidyapati wrote at least one work, "Kirtilata", in Maithili Apabhransha as late as the fifteenth century. The gradual discovery, publication and study of the vast Apabhransha literature during the present century is throwing more and more light on the origin and evolution of Hindi language and literature in its earliest phases.

The history of early Hindi literature proper, as contrasted with the Apabhransha tradition, is also divided into two main currents, Nath Sahitya and Charana, or Bardic Sahitya. Nath Sahitya is connected with Nath Sampradaya which was founded by Gorakhnath, a legendary figure, who is included in the list of eightyfour Siddhas. Most probably he lived in the tenth century and preached his gospel throughout India. He wanted to introduce certain reforms, his main object being to give a moral tone to the Siddha Sampradaya which had degenerated much by his time. Nath Sampradaya represents the contemporary religious movements after the disappearance of Buddhism from the land of its birth and before the revival of Bhakti cults in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Charana or Bardic literature represents the second current in the so-called Bhasha Sahitya of the early period of Hindi literature. It is connected with the courts of the rulers of Madhyadesh in the twelfth century. The most important amongst these was Kanauj in the heart of the Hindi area. It was the capital of the Gahadavar dynasty. It appears that Sanskrit language and literature were mainly patronised at this court. Naishadha, the last important great composition (Mahakavya), in Sanskrit,

was written by Shri Harsha who was one of the court poets of Maharaj Jaichand, the last Gahadavar ruler of Kanauj. A tradition has been preserved that two poets of Jaichand, Madhuhar and Bhatta Kedar, wrote Bhasha Kavyas, but they have been lost. Kanauj was sacked so thoroughly by foreign invaders that all traces of this most important centre of the old culture of Hindi area have been annihilated completely.

There are, however, literary compositions in Bhasha written under the patronage of other contemporary political centres in the Hindi area. Narapati Nalha, who according to traditions was the court poet of Bisaldev, the last Chauhan ruler of Ajmer, is said to have written "Bisaldev Raso" in about 1155 A.D. "Prithviraj Raso" is regarded as the work of Chand the court poet of Maharaj Prithviraj, the last Hindu ruler of Delhi. The literary traditions connected with the contemporary Chandel rulers of Mahoba in Bundelkhand have been preserved in the ballad entitled "Alha Khand".

Hindu courts of the Hindi area declined near about 1200 A.D. and with them ended the patronage of Bhasha literature by the rulers of the Gangetic plains for at least three centuries, until Akbar partly revived the tradition. The only person, who wrote something in Bhasha and was connected with the court of the Sultans of Delhi, was Amir Khusrau.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The Medieval Period of Hindi literature is characterised by the Bhakti movements, influence of classical Sanskrit literature and the rise of the literary Bhashas. All these tendencies become clearly marked by the beginning of the sixteenth century, though they started a century earlier. The literature of this period is divided into two sub-periods, the Bhakti Kal (from 1400 to 1600 A.D.) and Riti or Shringar Kal (from 1600 to 1800 A.D.)

The Vaishnava Bhakti movement, which was given fresh impetus in the South by the four great Acharyas, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vishnusami and Nimborka between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, percolated into northern India and began to show its marked influence gradually. In Bengal, Jayadeva wrote the Gita Govinda in Sanskrit as early as the twelfth century and later on the Maithili poet Vidyapati composed his Bhasha lyrics, depicting the love of Radha and Krishna. It should be remembered that Vidyapati was not a Vaishnava Bhakta poet.

Mirabai may, however, be regarded as the precursor of the Krishna Bhakti poetry written in Brajbhasha during the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries. The literary compositions of Mirabai have come down to us in the form of lyrics only. From the point of view of literary criteria or linguistic finish, Mira's lyrics cannot stand a critical test, but there is such a religious fervour and genuine emotional appeal in them that they are perhaps the most popular lyrics throughout the whole of the Hindi area including Rajasthan, and even in Gujrat in the extreme West.

The gospel of Vaishnava Bhakti was spread amongst the people of the Hindi area proper by Swami Ramanand in the east and Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, a Tailanga Brahmin by birth, in the west and Gujrat. Ramanandi Sampradaya produced the greatest Bhakta poet of Hindi, Goswami Tulsidas, who wrote his famous epic poem "Ramcharit Manas", popularly known as Ramayan, in the Awadhi dialect of Hindi in 1575 A.D. Most of his other major poetic works are, however, in Brajbhasha and are in the form of lyrics. In Goswami Tulsidas we have a unique combination of a rare literary genius and a great socio-religious reformer. His writings are specimens of literary standards of the highest order and at the same time give a message of hope and peace to the down-trodden and perplexed Hindu society of his times. "Ramcharit Manas" may be regarded as one of the most outstanding works not only of Hindi literature, or of Indian literature, but of the world in all ages.

Amongst the Hindi poets connected with Vallabha Sampradaya, or Pushtimarg as it is called sometimes, Mahakavi Surdas, the blind bard of Braj, has no rival so far as poetic genius goes. His lyrics on Krishna Lila written in chaste Brajbhasha have been collected under the title "Sursagar". It was the genius of Surdas which raised the local spoken dialect of Braj to the status of a polished literary language. He was the first great poet of Brajbhasha and still holds the foremost position. His strong point was in painting the extremely fine mental vicissitudes in connection with the feeling of love. At the same time these have a universal and eternal appeal hidden in them.

There are numerous other poets belonging both to Rama Bhakti and Krishna Bhakti Sampradayas, some of them of very high merit, but it is not possible to discuss all of them here. Mention may, however, be made of Nabhadas, the writer of "Bhaktamala" a versified biographical sketch of Bhakta poets, Nandadas, who is famous for his beautiful short poems, Hita Harivansha, the founder of Radha Vallabhi Sampradaya and Haridas, the guru of Tansen.

Almost contemporary with this, we find two other important literary currents in the first half of the Medieval Period, called

Sant Kavya and Premakhyan Kavya. The former is represented by Kabirdas and the latter by Jayasi. Kabir was not a literary man but he had unique force and directness in his style. This, combined with his earnestness and zeal, made his writings a potent influence in moulding contemporary Hindu thought. Writings of Hindi Sants, such as Kabirdas, Dadu Dayal, Malukdas, Doriyasahab and a host of others, have been more popular amongst the masses, than amongst the upper classes of the Hindi area.

Malik Mohamad Jayasi, the most successful amongst the Premakhyan writers of Hindi, was a Sufi poet of Awadhi. He wrote his famous epic poem "Padmavat" in Awadhi. Apparently, it is a story of a Rajput princess, Padmavati or Padmini of Chittor, but in fact it is meant to be an allegory describing the quest of the soul for its Beloved, and is interspersed with Islamic, more particularly Sufi, religious and philosophic thought. Examined from the point of view of pure literary merit the poem should get a high place in Medieval Hindi literature. It is one of the few successful epics written in Hindi. The plot, the dialogues, the descriptions of nature are all balanced and beautiful. The language is chaste. A large number of poets, mostly Muslim Sufis, preceded and followed Jayasi. Kutuban, author of "Mrigavati", Manjhan, author of "Madhumalati", Usman, author of "Chitravali", Nur Mohammad, author of "Indravati".

SECULAR TRADITIONS

The forces of the religious literary movements were spent by the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Moghul empire was established firmly by this time and the Hindu courts of Rajasthan, Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand had a more peaceful atmosphere. Such an atmosphere was suitable for the rise of Riti or Shringari literature which forms the latter half of the Medieval Period of Hindi literature.

The Riti or Shringari Kal extends from 1600 to 1800 A.D. Most of the poets of this period are connected with contemporary Hindu courts. They have written works directly on poetics. These works either contain both definitions and original illustrative poetic compositions of the poets, or are merely poetic works inspired by the background of the different branches of poetics.

We have a number of poets with artistic genius in the Riti school of Hindi poetry. The first and one of the foremost poets was Keshavadas connected with the court of Orchha in Bundelkhand. He wrote "Kavi Priya", a standard work on figures of speech, in 1601

A.D. Bihari, the author of the famous "Satsai" or 700 couplets with a highly pictorial style was connected with the court of Jaipur. Senapati, Deva, Matiram, Ghananand and Bhikharidas, are some of the other well-known poets of this School.

A different branch of poetry, belonging to this period, consists of narrative poems describing the lives and heroic deeds of literary patrons or some well known historical personages. Gorelal's "Chhatra Prabhasha," Sudan's "Eujancharit", and Man's "Rajvilas" are some of the well known examples of this type of composition. The heroic exploits of Shivaji inspired Bhushan to such an extent that in his work on Alankaras or figures of speech he gave examples describing the heroic deeds of this founder of the Maratha empire. Bhushan may be regarded as a poet of dynamic Hindu nationalism.

We do not find any example of a first or even second rate Hindi poet getting patronage at the Mughal court at Delhi or Agra. The few names which are mentioned are those of mediocre poets such as Ganga and Narahari. There was, however, one literary figure amongst the courtiers of Akbar who has got a unique place in Hindi literature. It is that of Abdur Rahim Khankhana. His lifelong experience of politics, royal court and affairs of the world has been incorporated in pithy and highly artistic Hindi couplets.

Dingal, or old literary Marwari, has also got a very rich literary tradition, both in prose and poetry. One of the most finished poems in Dingal is "Krishna Rukmini Veli" written by Maharaj Prithviraj of Jodhpur in 1580 A.D. The attention of the scholars of Hindi has been drawn to the rich mine of Hindi literature, Dingal Sahitya, only recently.

By 1800 A.D. the power of the Moghul empire had waned. The rising Maratha confederacy was defeated and ultimately British control was established almost throughout the whole of the Hindi area. With the rule of the East India Company, the Hindi people came gradually in contact with European civilization and culture, through the medium of English language, literature and institutions. The result of this new impact is reflected in the end of the Medieval period and the beginning of the Modern period in Hindi literature.

2. MODERN HINDI LITERATURE

By J.C. Mathur, I.C.S.

In the Hindi speaking region, European influences made themselves felt a little later than in Bengal where modern Indian literature

grew fastest and blossomed forth in much greater variety. But the formative forces were the same.

The printing press carried literature far and wide and made it unnecessary for creative work to be restricted largely to forms that could be memorized ; in other words it led to the development of prose. The second powerful factor was the rise of the middle class and the gradual waning of the influence of feudalism. This process began in 1765 when the East India Company acquired the Diwani of Bengal, but it was not till the Revolt of 1857 that the death knell of feudalism was sounded. We think of the 1857 Mutiny as the first war of independence, but it was also the last and lost battle of feudalism in India. Poets were no longer required to write encomia to honour princes and aristocrats. Literary genius was free to turn from the court to the courtyard. Thirdly, the transmission of modern scientific ideas from the West led to the whole gamut of powerful sensations and reactions among Indians during the two centuries. Then came the zest for the modern way of life accompanied by zeal for reformism. Close on the heels came distrust of alien rule. And, finally the West gave us the intellectual instruments of analysis and immense awareness of social and economic forces. Psycho-analysis and Marxism are typical of both. Perhaps never before in Indian history were our people subjected to such a crowded series of intellectual and emotional impacts in such a short period.

These factors gave rise to literary trends of which the broad characteristics have been recognizable in most Indian languages. What are these general characteristics? We can immediately spot, one, the development of prose and with it, of the novel and the short story ; two, introduction of social and psychological issues as themes ; three, resort to individualistic expression, suggestive imagery and personal symbols in poetry ; four, the emergence of realism as an accepted technique in all literary forms. These four salient features can be perceived in all modern Indian literature. We find echoes of Ram Mohan Roy and Michael Madhusudan Dutt of Bengal in Bharatendu Harishchandra of Hindi, and Mahadeva Govind Ranade of Marathi. Likewise the early drama of Kirloskar is comparable with that of Bharatendu Harishchandra, the prose of Vishnu Shastri Chipalunkar with that of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, the novel of Fakirmohan Senapati of Orissa with that of Premchand in Hindi, the poetry of Buddhdeva Bose with that of Agyeya. Above all these, stands the colossal figure of Tagore whose spell was cast over all modern Indian literature and particularly over a whole generation of Hindi poets known as Chhayavadis. Indeed, modern Hindi literature has often derived

stimulus and sustenance from Bengal partly because the first Hindi presses and newspapers were in Calcutta and partly because Bihar, a major Hindi-speaking unit, was for a long time attached to Bengal.

Nevertheless, in some respects Hindi literature has struck a sharply divergent mood from Bengali literature. In Bengal the literary renaissance had come much earlier, a projection of the gratitude and enthusiasm of the landed aristocracy, for Europe and its intellectual emissaries. In Hindi, after Bharatendu's lonesome efforts, very few from aristocracy turned to literature. People from the middle class, to be more precise, from the lower middle class, have been the custodians and promoters of the literary heritage in Hindi. In modern times the lower middle class has almost constantly lived under economic stress, it bore the brunt of political humiliations during the British rule, it has survived under the shadow of want during the two wars; it has had more direct knowledge of the condition of the masses, and yet it has been torn by the desire to be respectable. Literature created by such a class inevitably lacks variety, but it has a sense of revolt and resentment which came into Bengali literature much later under the influence of leftists. One might almost say that Hindi literature was progressive long before the now well-known Progressive Movement started. For the same reason, Hindi literature came under Mahatma Gandhi's influence more strongly than any other contemporary Indian literature barring Gujrati. To the lower middle class Hindi writer, the message of Gandhiji brought an intense faith in ideals, an earnest outlook on life and a keen awareness of his latent potentiality.

THE FIRST PHASE

Intensity and a sense of revolt—this Hindi literature has had in a large measure, but not so much variety and richness. It is only in the first phase of modern Hindi literature which prospered under the aristocrat Bharatendu Harishchandra of Banaras, that one meets with a diversity of literary expression and moods, until one comes to more recent times when more Hindi writers have had the advantage of University education. During the first phase of modern Hindi literature which extends from the middle of the 19th century to its close, Khari Boli, one of the component dialects of Hindi, emerged as the standard language for literary writing. It needs however to be emphasised that Khari Boli is not synonymous with Hindi, that Hindi literature as built up during the last nearly ten centuries consists of creative work in several regional dialects—Braj, Awadhi, Bundelkhandi, certain forms of Rajasthani and Maithili and Khari Boli. From the 16th to the 19th centuries most of Hindi

poetry was written in Braj and Awadhi. Khari Boli, which in its Persianized form and script became Urdu, was the spoken language of cities and courts. The British came in contact with all these and seized upon Khari Boli as the medium for contact with the people. The first books that were compiled as text books under their authority, Sadal Mishra's "Nasiketo-pakhyan", Inshaullah Khan's "Rani Ketaki's Kahani" and Lallu Lal's "Premsagar" were in Khari Boli. This medium was eagerly adopted and promoted by the missionaries who in their anonymity paved the way for the use of Khari Boli by the immediate precursors and contemporaries of Harishchandra, Raja Shiva Prasad Sitara Hindi and Raja Lakshman Singh.

The "Bharatendu Age", as it is rightly named, also introduced the Hindi reading public to such new forms as the novel, the essay and journalism. I might mention here the tentative efforts of Lala Srinivasa Das, Pratap Narayan Mishra, Bala Krishna Bhatt and Badri Narayan Choudhury 'Premghan'. These pioneers had something of the spirit of adventure in them and they used language with a freedom and exuberance that were lost to their more cautious and self-conscious successors. And yet in choosing their themes and ideas these writers were neither so radical nor so deeply charmed by western thought as their contemporaries in Bengal. Reformist in outlook, they still plead for respect for tried, traditional values in social conduct, their poetry still vibrates with devotional sentiments, though it occasionally breaks into lamentations about the sorry state of contemporary Indian life. Above all, the shades of the prison-house had not yet begun to close on these playful pioneers who had an innate sense of humour, a virtue that has been thwarted in the grim experience and high seriousness of the subsequent ages.

THE SECOND PHASE

High seriousness was certainly one of the outstanding traits of the second phase of modern Hindi literature which covers roughly the first quarter of the 20th century and which is usually called the Dwivedi Age after Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, the illustrious editor of the monthly journal "Saraswati" and the builder of modern Hindi prose. Under his influence, direct or indirect, blossomed forth the inspiring verse of Maithili Sharan Gupta and Hariaudh, the prolific fiction of Kishori Lal Goswami, the exploratory literary criticism of Mishra Bandhus. The urge for variegated expression was, however, restrained by the criterion of usefulness which Dwivedi, as the patriarch of the Hindi literary world, imposed. He found that Hindi was deficient in literature on economics, education etc., and so he encouraged translations. He regarded poetry as an elevating experiense in human life and sought to use it to better human conduct.

Obviously, all this meant a slight chilling of the genial current that so freely flowed in Bharatendu's times. But it led to one great asset. Useful literature needs as its vehicle a standardised language and this is what the Dwivedi Age built up so assiduously, so faultlessly. Grammar was rehabilitated, spellings reformed, and prose style chastened. It was an age of norms, and, I am afraid, of mediocrity. And yet, the writers of this period were by no means unaware of tremors around them. The anti-partition movement of Bengal, the first World War and the beginnings of the freedom movement before Gandhiji—all these stirred in them a patriotic mood. This did not, however, lead to rebellious expression, but to an emotional harking back to the glorious past of India, to a rather wishful reconstruction of mythology in the colours of contemporary idealism. "Bharat Bharati" of Maithili Sharan Gupta and "Priyapravas" of Hariaudh are typical of the mood of this age.

THE THIRD PHASE

Patriotic poetry of the more fiery kind made its appearance after Gandhiji's advent into Indian politics in 1917. This marks the beginning of the third phase of modern Hindi literature extending roughly from 1920 to 1937. Broadly speaking, the Hindi author felt the impact of the struggle for freedom in two ways : first, he was stirred by the limitless ardour of liberated imagination and rediscovered individuality. This was the indirect but the more pronounced and enduring influence. What is known as Chhayavada—a term generally used for the suggestive, imaginative and highly romantic verse brought into vogue by Sumitranandan Pant, Jaishankar Prasad, Suryakanta Tripathi Nirala and Mahadevi Verma—was but an offshoot and artistic expression of the new consciousness which Gandhiji's political and moral force generated. At the same time, a band of young poets under Makhan Lal Chaturvedi's lead responded more directly to the nationalist movement and thus came forth the vehement and impetuous verse of Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Balakrishna Sharma 'Navin' and Dinkar, who of course turned a new leaf later.

Essentially, however, this was an age of a deeper consciousness of the individual's own potentiality and helplessness. The potentiality made itself felt in the highly individualistic imagery and diction of the Chhayavadi poet, the helplessness in his constant preoccupation with his ennui, the sweet sadness that surrounded him like a thin veil, the Chhaya. But the critics gave the name Chhayavad to this school of poets principally because they found the imagery and figures of speech of Pant, Prasad, Nirala and Mahadevi Verma to be hazy and evanescent like the shadow

(Chhaya). The critics failed to see in this the spirit of rebellion against the matter of fact verse of the Dwivedi Age. But it was not altogether a spontaneous outburst of native springs. The individualistic figures of speech were also a derived virtue, they echo the lyrical splendour of Tagore and the haunting cadences of the Romantics of Engish Literature, Wordsworth, Shelly and Keats. Incidentally, to these poets nature appeared in a new garb—a mirror of their personal and fleeting moods, colourful, gentle and sad. In fact, the entire outer world was for the Chhayavadi poet an enlargement and amplification of his own restless, ever frustrated inner being. The personal mood was the mirror, the criterion and the all-pervasive environment. From this intangible experience mysticism was almost the next step and in some of their poems Mahadevi Verma and Jaishankar Prasad seem to hover over the mystic's realm. In the last canto of "Kamayani", the distinguished epic poem of this age by Prasad, there is almost a suggestion of the ecstatic fulfilment of a mystic experience. These diversions apart, the Chhayavadi poet is essentially a maker of highly personalized symbols, a singer of intensely felt tunes.

I have dwelt at length on Chhayavadi poetry but it will be incorrect to call this period from 1920 to 1937 the age of Chhayavad. A better description will be the age of high endeavour and the outstanding figures of this great age of endeavour are not only the four great poets mentioned earlier, but also Premchand, the novelist, Ramchandra Shukla, the literary critic and Jaishanker Prasad, the playwright. How multifarious have been the expressions and moods of this most impressive phase of Hindi literature will be evident from the fact that the fiction of this period is realistic, the drama historical and romantic, the criticism learned and classical.

Hindi fiction in Premchand's works attained a sudden maturity and intensity not to be seen perhaps in any other contemporary writing in India. His "Godan" is a world classic. In some respects, Sarat Chandra, the great Bengali novelist, was a greater portrayer of the inner soul of the individual in conflict. But Premchand, though lifting only occasionally the veil from over the troubled human mind, was yet able to achieve a deeper human persuasion. This is because he had a social intelligence that analysed penetratively the life of the common man in the villages. His singularity lies in combining a manifest purpose with a descriptive realism that knows how to remain supple and free. Further, his realism has that softening touch of the idealist which his younger successors seem consciously lacking in.

A contrast to the realism of this fiction was contemporary criticism which under Ramchandra Shukla acquired a deep authoritative voice and

an analytical mind. Strangely enough, both Premchand and Ramchandra Shukla left no direct inheritors of their manner though Jainendra Kumar was hailed as Premchand's successor in the beginning and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has been deemed to continue Shukla's work. Both of them, however, have too distinct and sharply developed personalities of their own to have been mere imitators and, in fact, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has emerged as an architect of contemporary Hindi criticism in his own right. Prasad's heritage in the field of drama has, however, continued to be the dominant formative influence even to the present day. Prasad's dramas—unstageable pieces—are a romantic and idealistic reconstruction of India's glorious past. Dramatic action is conveyed through the building up of an environment surcharged with deep social awareness. History is genuine, characters recognisable, conflict goes deep down into the inner beings. Thus Prasad—the greatest Hindi dramatist after Bharatendu Harishchandra—transmuted the lost stream of Harishchandra's emotional plays into a deeper experience. In more recent times there has been a wave of playwriting in Prasad's style, in spite of the changed mood of the age depicted in the significant plays of Lakshminarain Mishra, Ashk and Ramkumar Verma.

SINCE 1937

What has been the dominant mood of Hindi literature since 1937? That year marked the growth of the Progressive Writers' Association; it was also the first year of the Congress Ministries. Minds turned from the grim struggle against an alien power to economic problems and to the strange, dim and dark world of the sub-conscious mind. By this time a large number of middle class young men and women had come into close contact with western thought and ideologies; the speed and depths of assimilation were also much greater than ever before. In fact, the nearer we came to political independence of the West, the stronger have grown the ties of thought and expression with the West. Thus it is that today we have two clearly recognizable echoes of the West in the Pragatisil or Progressive Marxist writers, and in the Prayogvadi or Experimentalist poets. Historically, however, the Progressives came much earlier and at one time they overpowered practically all the resurgent minds of Hindi literature, the most eminent among them being Pant himself, whose "Gramya" and "Yugavani" were the clarion call of progressivism. Soon, however, he went out of favour with the orthodox among the Progressives, who have since then been more prolific but perhaps less impressive. They have, however, a stronger hold over fiction and in the works of Yashpal, Ashk and Rahul Sankrityayan, Hindi fiction has struck new grounds.

The Experimentalists have their high priest in Agyeya who has a sensitive mind and matchless sense of diction. They were, however, preceded by Bachchan who in some ways paved the way for this poetry of new diction. The Experimentalists strike out the ordinary imagery, they love to turn lights on unsuspected corners of experience and observation and they choose to give jerks to the reader's mind by leading him on to the uneven realm of impish intellectualism.

It is difficult to forecast the trends of tomorrow's Hindi literature. But the intellectual effort of sophistication of both Marxism and psycho-analysis has begun to cause a strain. There has been a welcome interest in the dialects, in folk life and culture. The first signs of this interest were perceptible in Benipuri's sketches of village life and in Ram Naresh Tripathi's collections of folk lore. Recently some fiction based upon close observation of folk life and characters has appeared and stirred the minds of readers. Perhaps while Hindi develops as the national language, its literature may seek sustenance and strength in the undying vitality of the common people of villages and in their colourful song and lyric.

INDIAN CARPETS SINCE MOGUL TIMES

INDIAN carpets—essentially a heritage of the Mogul times—are one of the most precious products of India's cottage industries. Akbar in his time set up royal looms the products of which were thought to surpass even those of Persia. The Herat carpet-weaving establishments, being nearest, furnished models and weavers were brought thence to continue their style in India.

The carpets made for the courts of the Grand Moguls, were of extravagant and luxurious beauty. Shah Jehan, it is said, made for the palace of Amber a set of rugs from the most precious wool, imported from Kashmir and from remote Himalayan valleys. Special carpets were of a very fine weave. A fragment of a prayer rug which has survived from those times, has the incredible fineness of nearly 2,400 knots to an inch.

Master draftsmen, designers and dyers were employed and no embellishment was neglected. It may be partly due to this princely patronage in the early days that Indian carpets have continued to compete with the most imaginative creations of the Persian carpet-weavers. But recent competition from the machine-made carpet industry of the West and other factors of fluctuating demand and uneconomic production have subjected this industry to untimely setbacks.

Since carpet-weaving, in the matter of design and pattern is a highly individualised form of art, it cannot usually be reduced to the formal mechanism of high-speed production. The machine-made products, however elegent, cannot acquire the individuality and aesthetic appeal of the hand-woven pile fabrics. This is true of a number of Indian handicraft products and therein perhaps, lies their specialised consumer-value as against standardised machine-goods.

In the case of carpets, the U.P. Government has already instituted certain measures to impose effective quality control over the products. Under their Quality Marking Scheme, an Inspection Depot was established in Mirzapur last year. The Indian Standards Institution has also published specifications for Mirzapur hand-loom carpets. Two grades MH and MS have been defined, the first being the minimum requirements for carpets exported to hard currency areas. With the establishment of the Quality Marking Depot, it is expected that the standards worked out by the Indian Standards Institution would be strictly adhered to. The Survey Team, sponsored by the All-India Handicrafts Board of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries has already suggested in their recommendations that as

soon as the important exporting firms have joined the Quality Marking Scheme, the Central Government should ban the export of non-quality marked carpets.

Another difficulty which the carpet industry, in common with other cottage industries faces, is in respect of procuring raw materials. A continuous supply of carpet wool is essential for the steady progress of this important indigenous industry. But there is a ceaseless competition between raw wool exporters and carpet manufacturers to acquire this commodity. The Government have been carefully regulating their export policies to satisfy both quarters. For example when the carpet manufacturers made representations, the Government in 1953, decided to restrict export to 25 million lbs. But again the wool exporters made counter-representation and towards the end of January 1954, the quota was increased by 10 per cent.

Though it is fully recognised that quantitative restriction on the export of wool should continue in the interest of the indigenous carpet industry, some kind of collective effort on the part of carpet manufacturers alone can ensure them adequate and timely supplies of raw material. To solve this difficulty, the Survey Team of the All-India Handicrafts Board, has suggested the setting up of a Joint Wool Purchase Organisation by the carpet manufacturers.

But basically the problem of wool purchase for this indigenous industry is inter-linked with the problem of starting co-operative agencies for the systematic development of wool production and marketing on rational lines. These agencies, assisted by their respective State Governments, in respect of finance and technical advice regarding sheep-breeding and grading, will be the best means of such development. Just as the 1,200 weavers of Guntakal have been helped to form a Co-operative Society and through this Society they have set up a spinning mill with their own share money and Government loan, similarly carpet weavers' co-operatives can handle wool production and marketing. Though the Government of India has attached priority to the reorganisation of handloom weaving industry which employs the largest number of workers among the small-scale industries, the pattern of aid and development is more or less similar in other cottage industries also.

Periodic grants of financial aid to encourage industries in different states have been made by the Centre. These funds have been utilised to provide technological and organisational directive to the industries, planning their marketing and research and to otherwise help in their production and publicity. If the rise of Central allocations during the

last few years can be any indication of the growing efforts in this direction then the figure for 1953-54, i.e. Rs. 5.64 crores makes an impressive record against the meagre amount of Rs. 50 lakhs allocated during the earlier four years from 1949-50 to 1952-53. In fact the figures for the current year are still more impressive. Out of the total budget provision of Rs. 10 crores, Rs. 9 crores have been already sanctioned for loans and grants.

This expanding interest in cottage industries has certainly opened up greater prospects of employment. The instance of the handloom industry in which production figures between 1952 and 1953 have been stepped up by a 100 million yards, is a clear proof of the greater employment this expansion drive in cottage industries has yielded.

Muslim Decorative Legacy

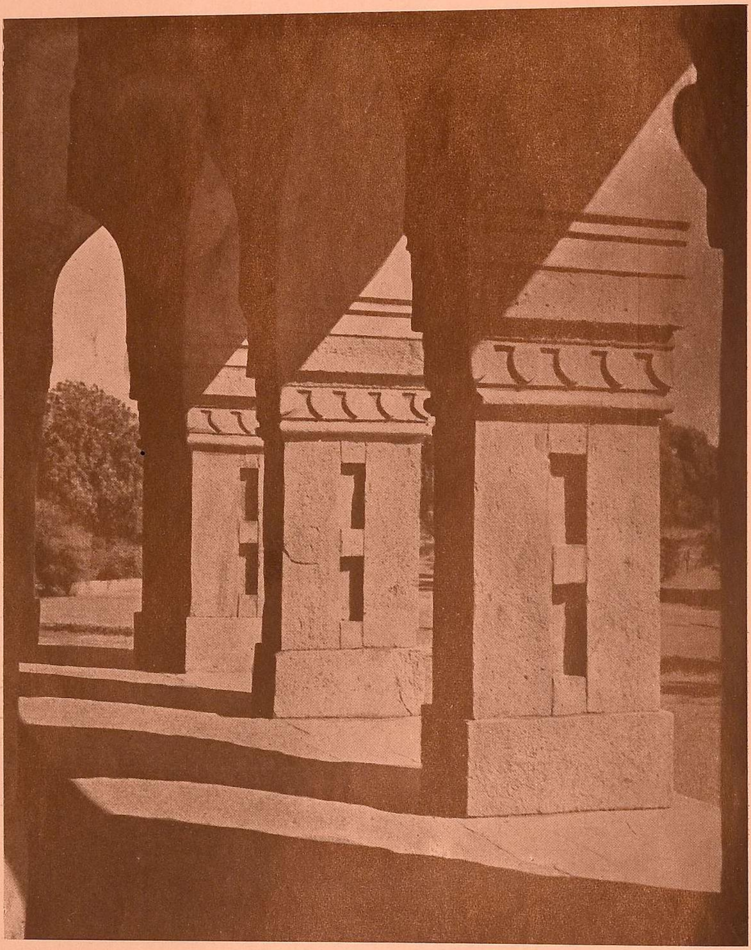
by

Krishna Chaitanya

A vast cultural osmosis has taken place in this land of ours right from the beginning of its history. Intimations of beauty, native to the soil, have radiated afar into the continental mass and also across the ocean. Likewise, India has received rich gifts from the numerous races that came to her as strangers and settled down as her children. One of the brightest of such legacies is the fine decorative tradition of Islam.

Dominating Delhi's skyline is the Qutab Minar. Legend has linked up this tower with that lovable hero Prithvi Raj, who fell in the battle against Mohamed Ghori, and his Queen Samyukta who "decked in bridal robes, mounted the funeral pyre and went to meet her lord and lover, through the flames, in the mansion of the sun." According to the legend, Prithvi Raj built this tower so that the queen could obtain a glimpse of the holy Jamuna every morning. Probably, it was begun by Qutbuddin, the slave general left behind by Ghori as his Viceroy, who declared himself independent and founded the Slave Dynasty.

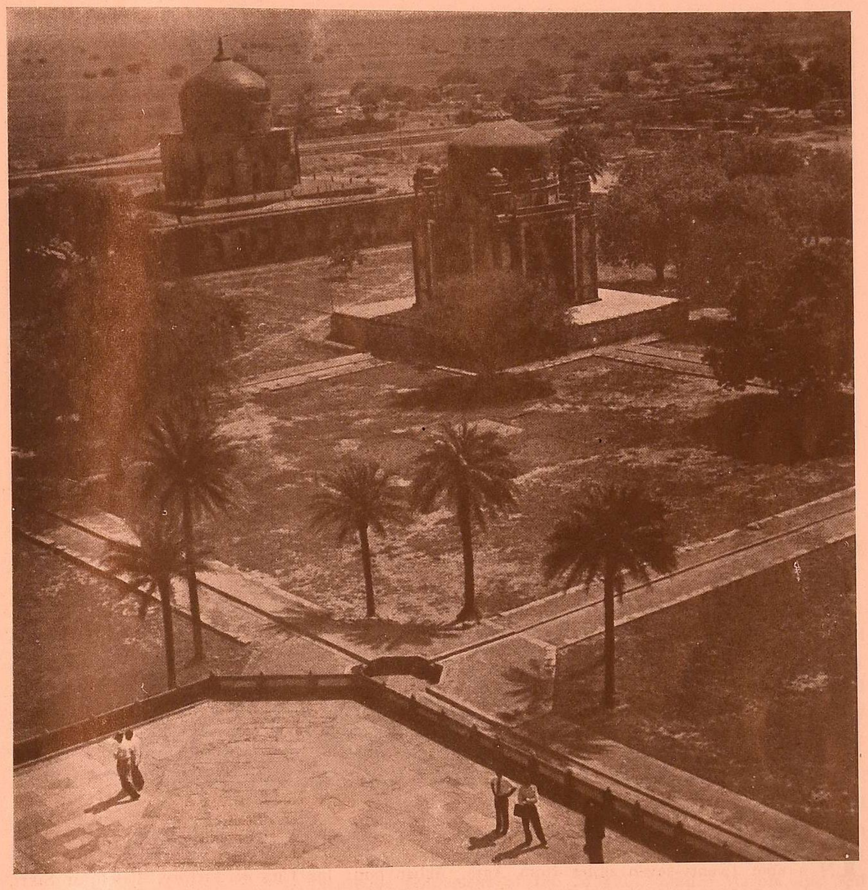
The shaft of the tower, which is two hundred and thirty-eight feet high, forty-seven feet in diameter at the base, slims to nine feet at the top. Four galleries girdle the shaft, dividing it into five storeys. The first storey has alternating angular and semi-circular flutings, the second has semi-circular and the third angular flutings, thus producing a graded, elegant variety. The galleries are supported by large stone brackets, beautifully carved in an elaborate and delicate honeycomb work which recalls, in miniature scale, the stalactite arches of the Alhambra in Granada. Synthetic again are the decorative bands that undulate over the fluted surface, for they consist both of Kufic calligraphy elaborately worked in decorative tracery as well as mouldings of naturalistic floral motifs belonging to the Hindu tradition.



IN retrospect, the superb decorative sense of the thirteenth century Qutab Minar strikes one as a sudden efflorescence, for in the subsequent centuries, there is a reversion to an archaic strength rather than a decorative elegance. Worthy of a soldier of fortune is Tughlakabad, the fortress founded in the fourteenth century by Ghiyasuddin, founder of the Tughlak Dynasty. The stones of the city walls weigh up to six tons each. Ghiyasuddin's tomb is within an enclosure, which is entered by a fine gateway, commanded by a bastion close by.

Though, in the security within, the Tughlaks allowed Hindu pillars, lintels and slabs to soften the effect, from outside the enclosure has a very austere impact, the walls sloping from the top and giving it the stern look of a fortress.

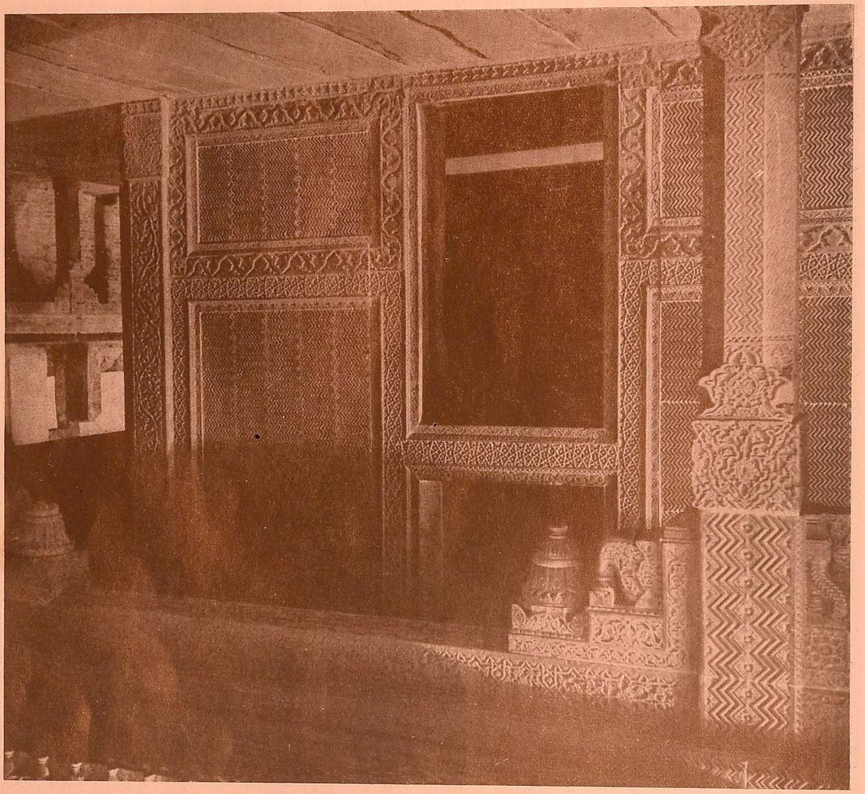
This tradition continued even during the weak interlude of Sayyid rule. The fifteenth century tomb of Mahmud Shah Sayyid is in the Lodi Gardens in New Delhi. Massive grey monolith columns lend dignity to the exterior arcade of this octagonal building. As can be seen from the picture, there is an archaic simplicity and strength of structure as well as surface texture in the whole design, though calligraphic work has been used with restraint to soften this effect slightly.



WITH the advent of the Moghuls, Muslim architecture and decorative tradition became a harmonious, fully assimilated element of the Indian landscape. The vista in this picture was taken from the high terrace of Humayun's Tomb in Delhi. It is typical of the landscape of Agra and other places where the Moghuls erected their architectural masterpieces.

Babur, the founder of the dynasty, came from Farghana, "watered by the Gir, with its beautiful gardens of the Usk, gay with violets tulips and roses in their season" and in the simmering heat of the Indian plains he always felt a nostalgic yearning for the Garden of Fidelity in Kabul: "When the flowers are in bloom, the yellow mingling with the red, I know of no place on earth to compare with it." And when his life was drawing to a close he went back to Kabul for his final rest. But his descendants were completely at home in India. Jehangir found Kashmir more lovely than Farghana. "In the entrancing spring, hill and plain are full of bloom. The gates, walls and courts, the very roofs are lit up by the flames of tulips, like torches at a feast."

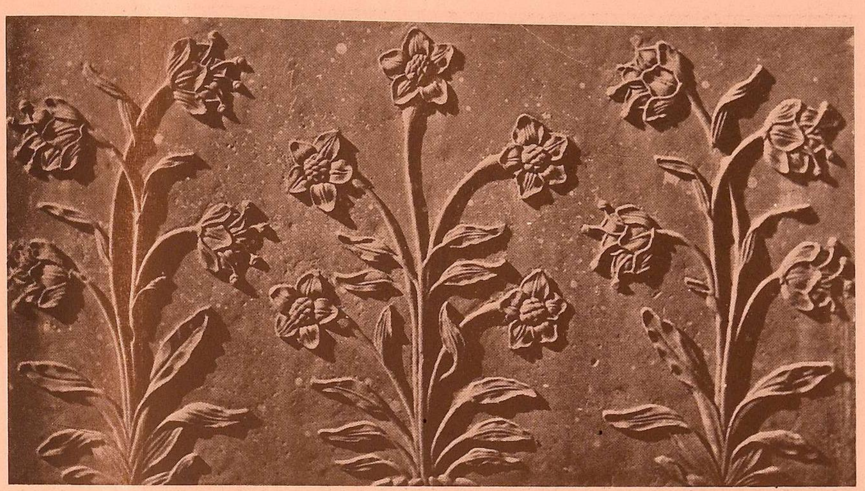
Humayun's Tomb is the first important building which the Moghuls erected in India. It marked the end of the sombre early Indo-Muslim style and laid the foundation of the elegant, sensuous style which culminated in the Taj. In Humayun's Tomb, decoration has not yet become additive, but remains functional. While in Persia the variegation of the surface of buildings was left to coloured tiles, here the richly coloured stones of India took over the function. Local quartzite with red sand-stone dressings and marble inlay explain the magic of the surface texture and colour of Humayun's Tomb.



IN a spot twenty-seven miles from Agra, Akbar built his City of Victory, Fatehpur Sikri, after his triumphs in Gujerat. This rose-red city, today desolate, stands an authentic witness to Akbar's splendid effort to achieve a synthesis between Hindu and Muslim cultures.

In the Diwan-i-Khas stands an enormous capital formed of three tiers of radiating brackets carved in Hindu style, the chiselling on the shaft and the base being of Saracenic character. The Astrologer's Seat recalls the Jain architecture of the eleventh century. The Panch Mahal is planned on the lines of a Buddhist Vihara. Jodh Bai's house is in the Hindu Rajput style and Birbal's house is a harmonious blend of Hindu and Muslim styles. The marvel of the synthesis is that the over-all effect is not one of patchwork.

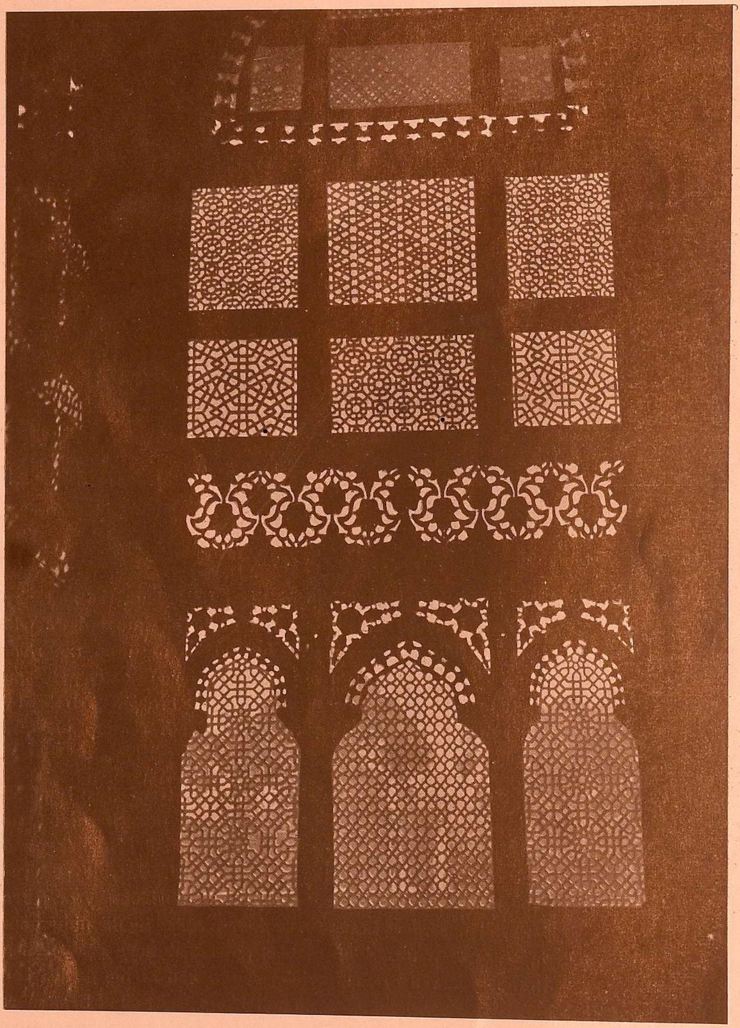
Hindu elements and the fine textural qualities of Moghul work can be seen in this picture of a pavilion from Fatehpur Sikri.



NEAR the Jamuna, Emperor Shah Jahan built the new city of Shahjahanabad which time has mellowed into today's Old Fort in Delhi. It was a walled town left open on the river front. Tons and tons of red sandstone for the outer walls and white marble for the inner apartments were brought to Delhi by the Emperor for building this seventeenth century pleasure palace.

The beauty of the inner apartments of this Imperial residence has so often been described that it needs no repetition. Above all, the palace was a symbol of the fine and sensuous refinement of the Moghul mind. Marble and red sandstone did not crowd out glimpses of the blue sky or green lawn. The gardens in the palace were purified by the ubiquitous presence of water. The channel entered through a perforation in the back wall of the pavilion at one end of the garden and flowed over shelving slabs to fall like a thin veil of September rain. Built in symmetry is another water pavilion right opposite. On the sides of the marble basin in this pavilion there are recesses in which wax or camphor candles were placed, giving a beautiful effect as the water streamed over them.

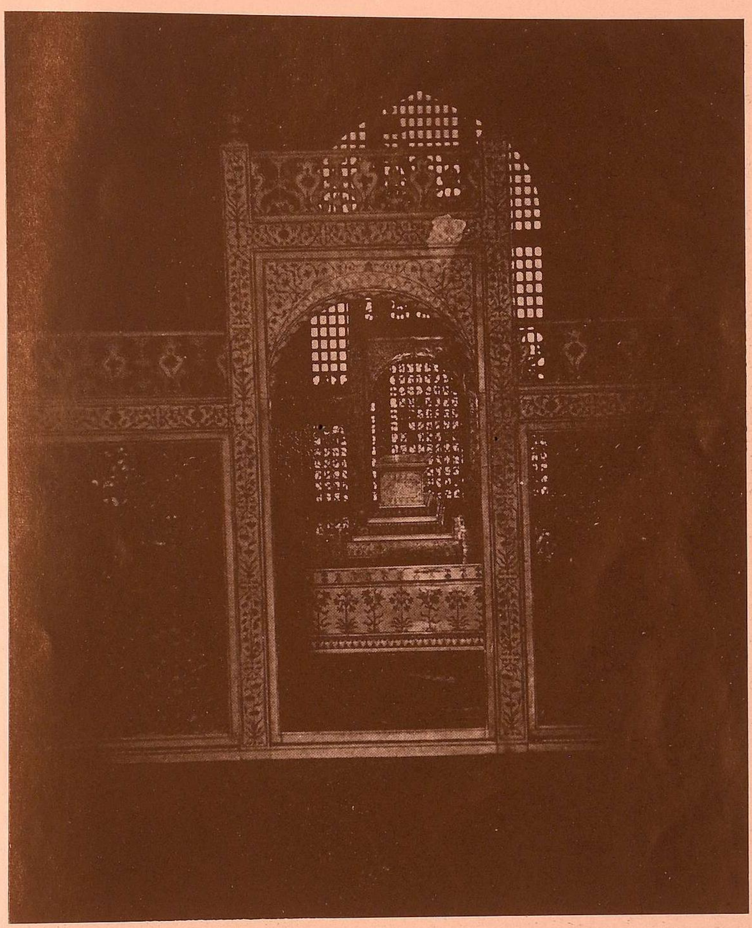
Leaving aside the well-known pietra dura work, we reproduce a sandstone slab from a scarcely noticed corner. The Moghul's love of natural forms has inspired the floral decorative motifs in this panel. The stylisation is unobtrusive. Leaf and bloom have the fleshy succulence of vegetable tissue. The hand unconsciously stirs to reach forward and pluck these blossoms.



DELHI and Agra, the Imperial seats, were not the sole centres of Moghul art. They were the points from which the new artistic tradition radiated into the provinces. There was an interchange of artists and artistic styles between the provincial Courts, Hindu or Muslim, and the Moghul Durbar. Noblemen who had moved in the orbit of the Imperial Court for some time tried to beautify their own palaces when they went back. Religious personalities who had received the homage of the Emperor also helped in this radiation because when they lay down to rest, beautiful monuments grew over their mortal remains.

One such instance is the Tomb of Mohammad Ghaus in Gwalior. He was a saint venerated by both Babur and Akbar. The Tomb is a noble specimen of early Moghul architecture. It is a hundred feet square with hexagonal towers at the four corners. The gallery is enclosed on two sides by a screen of the most exquisite tracery in pierced stone work.

An idea of the variety of patterns in the screen work can be gained from this picture.

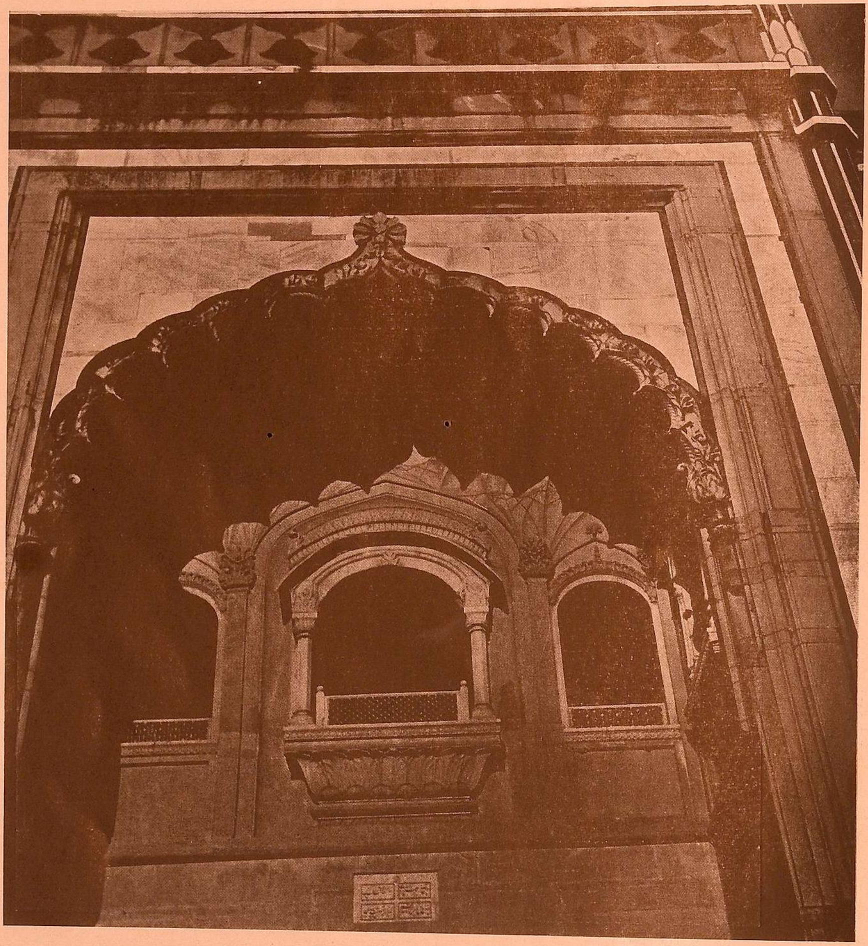


IN spite of Huxley, the finest monument set up by the Moghuls is the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum of virginal purity that grew up beside the waters of the Jamuna to commemorate the lost happiness of an emperor.

From the main gate, a stone causeway with a water channel and bronze fountains in the middle, leads between a double row of cypress trees to the mausoleum which stands on two terraces, the lower being of red sandstone and the upper of white marble.

In the heart of the mausoleum is the grave of Mumtaz Mahal. The forlorn emperor also founded his last resting place close by. Both the graves are of white marble and exquisitely and elaborately inlaid with semi-precious stones. They are enclosed by an octagonal screen of white marble pierced by openings so wonderfully and delicately fretted as to suggest the finest lace. The screen has a flower border in coloured mosaic.

Here, in a twilight filtered light, which takes the edge off anguished memory, lie an emperor and his consort and, we may add their impeccable art. For, never again was this elusive beauty captured with so fine a taste in rendition.



NEAR the civil aerodrome in New Delhi is the Tomb of Safdar Jung, Prime Minister of Ahmad Shah and nephew of Saadat Khan who founded the House of Oudh. It was the last big mausoleum to be erected in Delhi and stands on a high terrace within a walled garden. The masculine strength of the Tughlak period buildings has ebbed away and even the feminine grace of the later architecture begins to lose some of its freshness in this last edifice of the Moghuls. But even in this autumnal phase an intimation of the departed grace can be got from this picture of the balcony.

A RAGINI SET FROM AMBER

By ADRIS BANERJI

National Museum ; New Delhi.

JUST as Chitore, with its sacrifices, blood, toil and tears, over the charred embers of its beautiful ladies, is the pole star of Indian determination to remain free from Turkish yoke, Amber is illustrious in the history of Rajasthan for its contribution of those great qualities which had made the Rajput name so honoured—diplomacy, statesmanship, successful command in the army, tact, and ability to absorb a foreign culture and what is more, to produce a synthesis of two great cultures. While Ranastambhapura, Sakambhari, and even famed Chitore were being ravaged, history forgot to take note of an obscure princely house which was to play an immortal role, quite different from that of Mewar, and make the Rajput name great throughout India. To this house of Amber, a downtrodden India owes the first attempts at revival of her traditional culture. Several temples in Brindavan, observatories in different parts of India, etc., testify to the results obtained by it.

The school of painting which was cultivated at Amber and later on at Jaipur, the city planned by a Bengali architect, is one of the most well-known schools of Rajasthani art, because rightly or wrongly, it was assumed that it epitomised Rajasthani art—then called Rajput art.

The whole history of "Amber Painting" as I would like to denominate it, is in reality that of a mixed Mughal-Rajput school. Originally divided into small classes, sheer necessity drove the Amber Chiefs to embrace Mughal alliance. Biharimall was the real founder of Kachchhawa greatness. He sought Babar's aid, and the Rajaship of Amber with the command of 5,000 was conferred on him by Humayun. His son Bhagwandas (1575-1592 A.D.) married his daughter to Akbar the Great (1556-1605 A.D.) and the first benefits of this tactical alliance, were reaped by his son Maharaja Man Singh (1592-1614 A.D.).

The successors of Man Singh possessed neither the genius nor the capabilities of Biharimall, Bhagwandas and Maharaja Man Singh and the power of Amber declined. It was revived under Mirza Raja Jai Singh I (1625-67 A.D.) in whose reign the foundations of "Amber Art" were really laid. The beginnings were made at

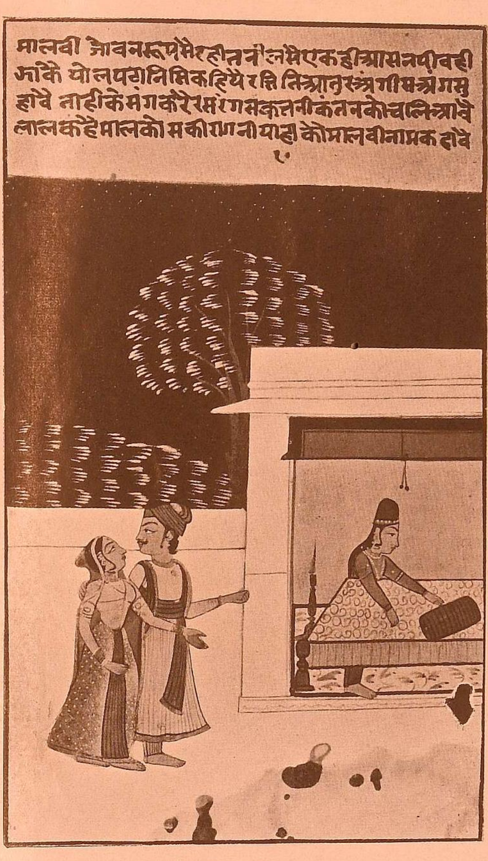
Amber and it is just and fair that the later phases of the art which flourished in Jaipur should also go by this name.

With the accession of Jai Singh II, also known as Sawai Jai Singh (c. 1692-1743 A.D.) the pendulam again swung back. After Man Singh, though politically bankrupt, this ruler was one of the most noted in the annals of Amber. Ironically, enough, Amber which helped to lay the foundation of the greatness of Mughal empire, also was responsible for frittering away that great heritage.

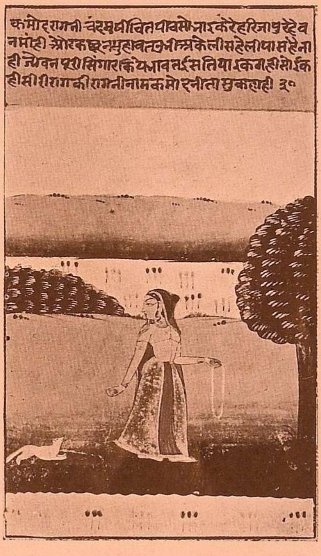
Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II was one of those unfortunate persons who are destined to be born at the wrong moment, in a wrong age. He was born in 1686 A.D., the very year in which Newton completed his *Principia*. He succeeded to the throne in 1699 A.D. a few years before the death of Alamgir—the symbol of the death of the Mughal empire. He had initial difficulties in maintaining himself on the throne of Amber. By 1708 A.D., he consolidated his position. During his reign the great edifice so lovingly erected by Babar, Humayun and Akbar was not only tottering, but was suffering the commencement of those long, tedious and heart-rending experiences before the final collapse took place. The age, the time and the political situation demanded a great military commander, a far-sighted statesman and a strategist. Unfortunately, he had none of these qualities. Instead, he was a great builder of cities—he founded modern Jaipur—and an enthusiastic astronomer. Muhammad Shah made him *Subahdar* of Agra in 1719 A.D. and also of Malwa a little later. This *subah* was again given to him in 1734 to enable him to hand it over permanently to the Peshawa.

From an early age, Jai Singh II showed a predilection for astronomy, and by study, application and researches became a master of the subject. He found the astronomical tables in use defective, and set himself the task of preparing new ones. He organised a regular staff of workers and sent some of them to foreign countries. He invited Europeans to Jaipur. Jai Singh II was acquainted with Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the astronomical tables of Ulugh Beg, La Hire's *Tabulæ Astronomicæ*, and Flamsteed's *Historia Colastis Britanica*. He probably collected and studied all available astronomical works, both European and Oriental.

The first result was the compilation of *Ziz-i-Muhammad Sahi*, a set of astronomical tables prepared under the directorship of Jai Singh. A complete Persian manuscript of this work exists in the British Museum and an incomplete Devanagari manuscript in Jaipur.

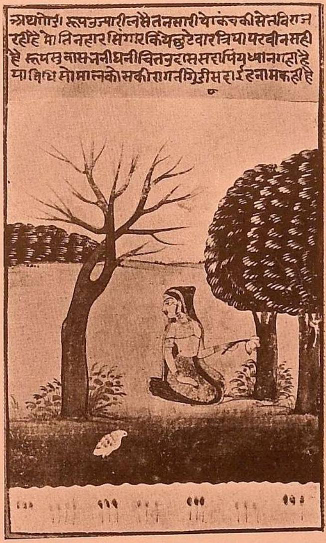


Malavi Ragini. Amber School.
Early 19th Century A. D.

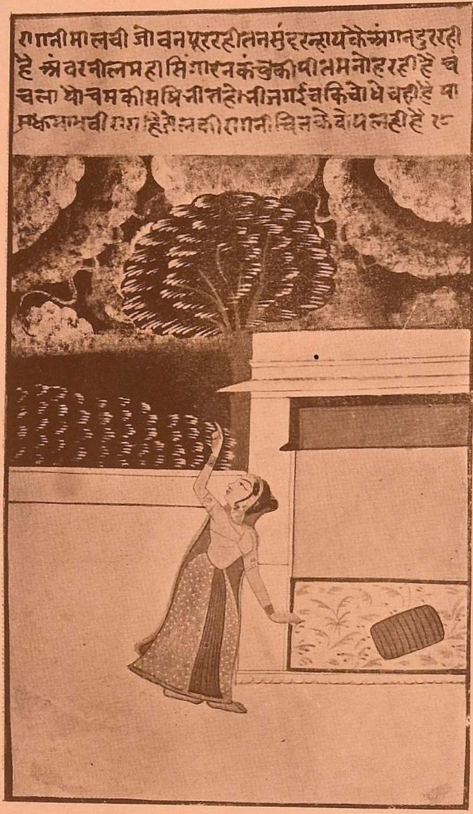


Kamoda Ragini. Amber School.
Early 19th Century A. D.

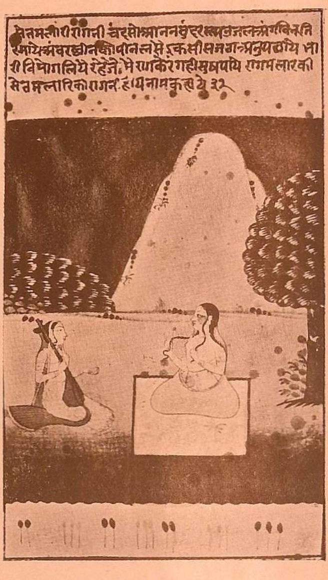
(From the National Museum set of Raginis)



Gaudi Ragini of Malakosha Raga.
Amber School Early 19th Century A.D.

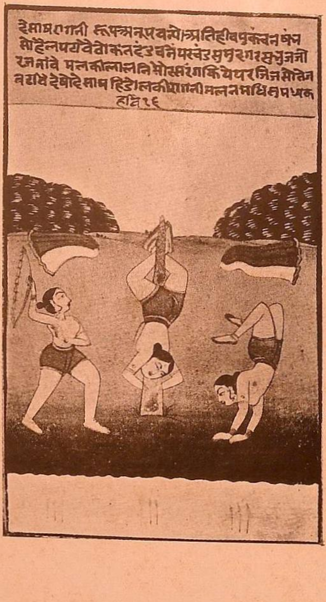


Megha mallara probably written as Malvi.
Amber School. Early 19th Century A.D.



Ragini Seta-Mallara of Raga Mallara. Amber School. Early 19th Century A.D.

(From the National Museum set of Raginis)



Ragini Desakha of Hindo'a Raga Amber School. Early 19th Century A.D.

His second contribution lies in the invention of metallic instruments 'agreeable to musalman books', and structural instruments. Last but not the least important, was his foundation of observatories at Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, Banaras and Mathura.

In 1724 A.D. was erected the now famous observatory at Delhi, in which were installed for observation instruments of his invention such as the *Samrat yantra, Jai Prakasha*, *Rama* and *Dakshinavritti yantras* with particular reference to rules of geometry, the position of the meridian and latitudes of the place. In 1734 A.D. was constructed the Jaipur observatory which contained in addition to the instruments similar to Delhi, a number of new metal instruments of considerable scientific value. The third similar observatory to his credit was established at Ujjain between 1728 and 1734 A.D.

The Banaras observatory is reported to have been built originally by Maharaja Man Singh (c. 1614 A.D.) but the present instruments were erected by Sawai Jai Singh II. He is also reported to have built another observatory at Mathura.

This lengthy digression was necessary to point out the second current of Mughal influence which shaped the destiny of Amber art. Though lacking in originality of conception, design and execution, the decadent phase of Mughal painting under Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-1747 A. D.) was destined to have a glorious end. When the invasion of Nadir Shah left Delhi ravaged, artists, dancing girls, musicians and craftsmen migrated to safer harbours. It was this *rococo* Mughal painting that originated the outburst of the fine 'Pre-Kangra' phase of Pahari painting at Guler, Jammu, Chamba, Jasrota, Suket, Mandi, etc., culminating in the glories of Kangra. In the plains Jaipur, Bundi, Jaisalmere, Sirohi, Kishengarh, Alwar, Jodhpur—all had flourishing ateliers.

The early history of Amber Art is controversial and far from clear. But it is doubtful if there was any artistic activity before the end of the 16th century. We have the famous *Razmnamah* manuscript completed for Akbar before 1588 A. D. Notwithstanding the Rajput female type it is doubtful whether this celebrated manuscript was the work of Rajput artists or those engaged in the Imperial Academy, at Sikandra. Laud *Ragmalas* have been definitely accepted as Deccani. Leaving aside the question of origins and development of Amber Art for a future occasion, let me confine myself to the later phases, to which period the *Ragamala* set in the National Museum under discussion belongs.

The set contains the following *Raginis* : (1) Malasri. (2) Patamanjari. (3) Gaudi. (4) Malavi. (5) Gunakali. (6) Vilavali. (7) Desakha. (8) Malavi (probably a mistake for Megha mallara). (9) Dhanasri. (10) Vasanta. (11) Ramakali. (12) Sveta-mallari. (13) Kamoda. (14) Lalita. (15) Gauda-mallara. (16) Bangali. (17) Panchama.

A deep red border with white lines on either edge 1.35" in breadth ; two white parallel lines on black border ·3" in breadth. Lastly yellow line border. The uniformity of borders demonstrates that it was the work of one guild or family of artists if not by an individual worker. We shall see later, that it will also lead to some interesting further conclusions.

The background shows no originality, but a stereotyped treatment lacking vitality, rhythm and worst of all, functional purpose. The Malasri *ragini* has bluish grey monochrome horizon against which we find a palm tree and the top of a large one. The identical colour is found in Gaudi, Gunakali, Vilavali, Desakha, Dhanasri, Vasanta, Ramakali and Kamoda raginis. The second type of background is met with in Malavi where the solid darkness of the night is represented by coal black colour ; which is met with also in Patamanjari and Sveta-mallari raginis. The third type of background is met with in the second Malavi ragini, which I consider to be a mistake for Megha-mallara. The treatment consists of masses of black clouds edged with grey to indicate the silver-lining and serpentine curves of lightning treated in gold and red colours. A rugged mountain with small foliage clinging to its sides has been introduced in Sveta-Mallari Ragini, along with small flower plants with red flowers, green sward and a lotus pond in the foreground. The fourth variety of background is met with in the Kamoda where rolling downs of light brown colour with a lotus pond at their foot and trees are represented. The foreground has the lotus pond repeated.

Each miniature has a *doha* written on the top. The iconography is at once simple, and direct in its appeal. However strange, crude and lacking in polish these methods seem to those in the habit of considering figures in perspective, within their limits they incarnate a special charm. They bring the scenes before our eyes with astonishing vividness and produce a general impression which captivates the spectator against his will. Their disconcerting effect is in part due to representational duties forced upon them by a power to which utility was the first consideration. The search for intensity dominates the set. "There could be no intensity without simplification, and to some degree, no intensity without distortion : the distortion of what is seen naturally. Simplification, distortion of forms

and modification of natural appearances are ways of arriving at an intense expressiveness of form." (Ozenfant).

Malasari Ragini depicts a woman seated on a high chair with sides covered with cloth and a pillow, holding a lotus in her right hand, while an attendant faces her with two lotuses in her hands. The *Patamanjari Ragini* shows the *Nayika* at night holding a green parrot in her hand. *Gaudi* shows a woman seated in a forest at night holding a red lotus. In the foreground are wild flowers, water fowls and a lotus pond with lotuses in it. The *Malavi Ragini* consistent with the traditions of Ujjain, the capital of Western Malwa, has a romantic theme : the *Nayika* being led to the bed chamber by her gallant. *Gunakali Ragini* has almost the same scene as *Malasri*. The *Vilavala Ragini* has a toilet scene. The lady is seated on a terrace over a carpet of mauve colour with one hand on her head and other engaged in combing it. There is an attendant standing by. The *Desakha Ragini* depicts women performing gymnastic exercises in grounds of green and brown with a lotus pond in the foreground. Two *lehngas* are lying on the ground.

The next miniature is labelled *Malavi*, but I feel this is an error on the part of the scribe for *Megha Mallara*. The horizon is overcast with dark masses of cloudbanks edged with grey in which lightning is playing and the Nayika is pointing to it. The *Dhanasri Ragini* has a *Nayika* seated on a terrace before a pavilion with a confidante, looking at a portrait. The *Vasanta Ragini* consists of *Nayaka* and *Nayika* on a terrace accompanied by attendant woman and musicians. *Ramakali Ragini* shows a *Nayika* seated on a high seat turning her head from a lover prostrate at her feet beside a woman attendant. *Sveta-mallara* shows the *Nayika* seated naked to the waist hearing the *vina* played by her maid. *Kamoda* has a theme almost similar to *Utka Nayika* ; a woman in the forest followed by a fox. The theme of *Gaudmallara* shows the heroine playing on her *vina* at night with a girl companion. The iconography of *Bangali Ragini* is novel and original : a woman counting her beads before a room on a terrace. There is a tiger beside her. *Panchama* has the Nayika with a musician and a companion on a terrace. *Puravi Ragini* has a woman sitting with her hands crossed over her head.

The architecture lacks elegance though the survival of the best traditions of Rajasthani school are traceable here and there, such as the well-known motif of doors and windows with screens with red ground and green border. The presence of architectural features in the design of this set, the work of one artist or several of the same school, was not a special feature but was introduced as a part of the theme—the archetype. Unlike Malwa, we have no facade or complete buildings but only portions

of a room or pavilion with terraces, arising out of the iconography. So here we have the instance of a pre-determined canon accepted by the artist. The character is rococo Mughal. They lack variety, originality and relevancy as a spatial unit.

In costumes and textiles the set furnishes valuable evidence regarding social, economic and industrial conditions.

The female dress generally consists of a *choli* upto the breast (a survival of 17th century idioms of expression) of yellow, green, red and mauve colours ; *lehngas* with cluster of pleats in front, of variegated colours and sometimes with spotted designs in black, pink or green ; and finally *dupatta* of a diaphanous material. The exception to this general rule are met with as in the Malavi Ragini in which the attendant wears a *gherdar jama* of a green material, red *pyajama*, red domical cap with zari border. The second instance is in the Desakha ragini in which the women gymnasts wear *kachchh* of brown and red materials with zari border. The male costume consists of a *pagree* similar to those worn by marwaris of Calcutta, *achkan* reaching upto the ankle, blue waist-coat, *kamarband* and *pyajama* of a striped style. In Lalita Ragini we have orange *gherdar jama,* blue *pyajama*, grey *kamarband* and blue *uttariya*. Pearl necklaces, ear-rings, etc. are worn by men. The female characters wear *sinthi*, ear-rings, gold necklaces and armlets, bracelets, *churis* and anklets. The lack of pearls is a significant feature.

Medieval Indian paintings happen to be a valuable source of information for the history of arts and crafts in vogue at the time. Curtains of velvet or other textiles with red and green border, yellow carpets worked with green threads, carpets of mauve colour, charpoy with guilded legs, spread with heavy and thick mattresses, cushions covered with textiles, bed covers of various colours, lamp on brass stand, peacock feather fan, blue enamelled pitchers, a brass or gold toilet box and mirrors are found. Amongst the musical instruments the *vina* and *sarengi* occur.

The flora and fauna are : red lotuses, green parrot, lotuses in pond, wild flower shrubs, gnarled trees and large trees, water-fowl, fox, cocoanut palm and a tiger. The representation of masses of leaves and branches of trees call for little notice. The mass is painted very summarily in coal black over which has been drawn parallel strokes in yellow, thereby creating an illusion of green. The horizon is generally painted with monochrome grey colour and nocturnal sky with coal black. In

scenes depicting an impending thunder-storm masses of cloud banks are painted in light black edged with grey. Lightning is represented with gold and red colours.

The rococo Mughal traditions, its departure from time-honoured Rajasthani traditions, the survival nevertheless of a few idioms and the treatment of flora, enable us to ascribe this set to the early part of the 19th century.

SRI NARAYANA TIRTHA

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NARAYANA Tirtha is remembered most today by the adherents of the *Bhajana-sampradaya,* and to some extent by Carnatic musicians who reverentially refer to him as Tirtha Narayana Swami or Tirtha Narayana Yati. Indeed, a few of his compositions may still be heard in concerts and are mentioned as Tarangas. The better informed know that his Sanskrit songs are taken from a musical poem on Krishna composed by him, called the *Krishnalila Tarangini* and that the composer was a Sannyasin worthy of the highest respect.

Narayana Tirtha, as his suffix Tirtha shows, was a Sannyasin ; he was an *advaitic* sannyasin. The use of music as a yogic sadhana is known from the times of sage Yajnavalkya, and the singing of God's names, praises and glory, Bhajana, as part of devotional exercises is also well-known. There was a line of advaitic sannyasins among whom this tradition of cultivation of music and Bhajana as a spiritual aid and a devotional adoration of God was prevalent. We have the illustrious example of Sadasiva Brahman, a great *advaitic siddha*, and author of not only Sanskrit philosophical treatises but also of songs on the supreme Brahman, and the various forms of the Godhead. Of equal greatness is Narayana Tirtha, less celebrated as a writer of Sanskrit treatises but occupying a far more important place in the history of Carnatic music and the *Bhajana-sampradaya.* We had also Upanishad Brahman of Kanchipuram, elder contemporary and inspirer of Muthuswami Dikshitar and Tyagaraja and also an incumbent of the Kanchi *Sankaracharya Pitha* itself who composed a musical poem called *Sivagitimalika.* It is in conformity with this tradition that the celebrated Tyagaraja also took to sannyasa towards the end of his career.

Like Sadasiva Brahman and the later Tyagaraja, Narayana Tirtha was a Telugu Brahmin. When Vijayanagar declined and the kingdom of Tanjore became, first under the Telugu Nayaks and then under the Mahrattas, a centre of patronage for art and letters, many families of talent and attainment, authors, poets, musicians, dancers and dance-masters, left the banks of the Krishna and the Godavari and sought the banks of the Cauvery. Narayana Tirtha was one of these and it is in the Tanjore District that he became famous, that he lived and worked and finally attained *samadhi.* The village hallowed by his stay is Varahur and the village sanctified by his *samadhi* is Tiruppunturutti.

As to how Narayana Tirtha came to the Tanjore area, we do not have any authentic information. But we have a traditional story told about this. One night, in the village called Nadukkaveri, in an empty *mandapa*, a Sannyasin afflicted with severe stomach ache was under-going acute pain. As a little drowsiness came on him, he had a dream in which he was told : "Early morning when you wake up, you will see an animal; keep following it and at the place to which it brings you and vanishes, you will be rid of this stomach-ache." When it dawned and the recluse opened his eyes, they fell on a boar which was standing in front of him. The animal began to move and the recluse followed it. They went three miles along the banks of the river *Kodamurutti*, a branch of the Cauvery, and reached the village Varahur otherwise called Bhupatirajapuram after a Tanjore King. In that village was a temple dedicated to Lord Venkateswara and the boar that was leading the Sannyasin vanished into that temple. It then struck the recluse that it was the Lord Hari once incarnated as the great boar who had again, out of his compassion for him, showed himself as the boar and brought him to that temple of Venkateswara and that if he stayed on and worshipped Lord Venkateswara in the shrine; he would be rid of his malady.

The Sannyasin was Narayana Tirtha. Because a boar (Varaha) had brought him there, it is said, the village Bhupatirajapuram acquired the name Varahur. Narayana Tirtha stayed on and became freed of his ailment. Consequently, the sanctity of the shrine and the village increased. It was here, as an act of grateful homage to the deity here, that Narayana Tirtha began to compose the musical play on the story of Lord Krishna, from birth up to the marriage of Rukmini, the *Krishna Lila Tarangini* or the River of the Sports of Lord Krishna. The dedicatory song at the beginning mentions 'Sri Varahapura Venkatesa'.

That this village of Varahur was a centre of music and dance in the times of the Nayak Kings of Tanjore (17th century) is attested by the fact that the celebrated composer of dance-*padas* Kshetragna, visited it and has mentioned it in his *padas*.

In Varahur, Narayana Tirtha established a Bhajana-sampradaya, of followers of his who sang, danced and rendered in gesture his musical play on the Lord and celebrated the festival of Krishna every year at the time of Janmashtami or Gokulashtami as we call it here. The performance of *uriyadi* (the enactment of Krishna stealing butter placed on top of a pole) as part of this festival attracted a large concourse of people.

Thus Narayana Tirtha was one of those who augmented the Bhagavata tradition in the Tanjore District and spread the cult of adoring

the Lord with song and dance. There are three verses of praise on Narayana Tirtha that are sung at the outset in Bhajanas. Followers of this Bhajana tradition would with *Tambur* and *Chipla* in hand and bells (Gajjai) on feet, go about singing the Lord's praise and dancing. Of the celebrated Bhagavatars of Varahur were Varahur Panju Bhagavatar and Varahur Gopala Bhagavatar and a portrait of the latter, in typical costume, is still worshipped by the votaries of Bhajana.

In addition to the musical and dramatic treatment of the story of Krishna, Narayana Tirtha, as a Sanskrit writer, has given us a devotional poem on the same theme, '*Haribhaktisudharnava*'. One of the prayer-verses at the opening of this poem forms part of the preliminary songs sung at the beginning of *Hari Kathas*. As an exponent of the school of Bhakti, he wrote a commentary also on the Bhakti Mimamsa Sutras of Sandilya. Both these works are yet in manuscript. On his *Krishna Lila Tarangini* which has so far been printed only in Grantha and Telugu scripts, there is an unpublished Sanskrit commentary also written by one Venkatesa, assisted by a Govinda Dikshita, and recently, I was surprised to find manuscript copies of both the text and the commentary in far away Banaras.

In some of the songs in his *Krishna Lila Tarangini*, the author calls himself also *Siva* Narayana Tirtha. His guru was *Siva* Ramananda Tirtha.

Narayana Tirtha attained Siddhi at the village of Tiruppunturutti, seven miles to the east of Varahur, where at his Samadhi, an annual festival is still held.

The same Bhagavata tradition was responsible also for the cultivation of a dramatic art, in which devotional stories composed in the form of songs and set to dance were sung and danced and interpreted in gesture by Brahmin devotees. This is the tradition maintained in *Kuchpudi* in Andhra and in some of the *Agrahara* villages of Tanjore, Merattur etc. In Merattur and the Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjore, there is a Telugu play intended for such enactment composed by one Narayana Tirtha. This play, called *Parijataharana nataka* has the *mudra* or signature of Narayana Tirtha in some of its pieces and from its concluding piece, appears to have been composed at Merattur village and dedicated to Lord Achyuta Varadaraja there. It was my good fortune to bring to light this composition in the pages of the Journal of Madras Music Academy (Volume XIII. pp. 74-76), but students of Telugu literature who have had occasion to examine this are not unanimous in their opinion about this play being the work of the great Narayana Tirtha himself. If it is a genuine work of his, it would give us some historical data ; for Merattur was gifted to families of musicians, dancers etc. by King Achyutappa Nayak of Tanjore

(A. D. 1561-1614), and renamed after himself as Achyutabdhi. It would show also that Narayana Tirtha had something to do with the dance-drama tradition at Merattur, which is a thing to be expected.

I started by saying that it was his music that is still best remembered and that of his works, the Tarangini is most widely known. It was, as I already said, the example of sannyasins of his type that induced Tyagaraja also to enter the fourth asrama at the end of his life. The influence of Narayana Tirtha on Tyagaraja was more than this. The two musical plays of Tyagaraja took inspiration from Narayana Tirtha's *Tarangini*. Also, the fact that Narayana Tirtha's pieces, from his *Tarangini*, were widely sung, is borne out by the influence they had on the mind of Tyagaraja, the great composer, who echoed phrases from Narayana Tirtha's compositions as I have shown in a special article in the Tyagaraja Centenary volume issued by the Andhra Gana Kala Parishad, Rajahmundry (pp. 87-88).

The *Krishna Lila Tarangini* is one of the numerous works that rose in the wake of the *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva and may be acclaimed as the only one among such works to have gained or maintained a comparable musical status. It is written in perfect literary Sanskrit, a fact to be specially noted because, in the next age, though Sanskrit was handled for music compositions and though even while Telugu was handled, it was a style dominated by Sanskrit, the grammatical and literary equipment of composers became a secondary qualification. The composition is in twelve Tarangas and the songs are linked with verses and varied by prose, *gadya*, passages. It is composed as a regular dance-drama and there are directions that such and such a context is being sung and gesticulated in the coming piece and so on. There are also set rhythm-syllables or *jatis* for dance, fitted to some of the pieces, *i.e.* the long prayer of the Yajnapatnis in the third Taranga, and the composition on Rasakrida in Nata and Dhruva tala in the seventh Taranga. The rehabilitation of the Bhajana and Bhagavata tradition which put forth these blossoms of the art of music, dance and composition would be the renaissance of a cultural heritage whose unity could be seen from the Cauvery to Kamarupa.

FOLK DANCES OF INDIA

By G. VENKATACHALAM, MADRAS

FOLK art is the art of the people and, therefore, it is the most natural and spontaneous expression of the soul of the people. It is also their most natural mode of aesthetic response to environmental influences. The artless simplicity of the village folk, their unsophisticated philosophy of life and religious fervour often find beautiful expression in folk arts, especially in music and dance.

India, more than any other country in the world, is rich in these arts. Her age-old civilisation, which saw many races and cultures rise, grow and decline within her bosom, has preserved even to-day remnants of their rich and varied styles and types. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, the country is rich in them ; and each State and even districts have their own characteristic features and forms, though the fundamental impulse is the same.

The folk dance in India is essentially religious. Worship and ceremony call forth music and dance, and the inborn instincts of the people have evolved wonderful patterns out of them. Some are incredibly clever, such as designing with the feet, while dancing, creating a lovely lotus flower or an intricate geometric form on the smooth surface of spreadout sands with coloured powders, or the balancing of about half-a-dozen water-filled pots on the head while executing difficult and rhythmic movements over a soft, unbaked earthen pot and dancing to drum-beats.

There are as many varieties of folk dances in India as there are tribes and traditions. Some dances are associated with certain kinds of professions, like those of the hunter, the bird-catcher, the fisherfolk, the wandering gypsy and even the beggars. There are all types ; some are ceremonial, social or domestic, while others celebrate the occasion of marriage, harvest or victory.

The most important of them are seasonal, and they are universal throughout India. South India, Saurashtra, Bengal, Orissa, Marwar, the Punjab, the Himalayan Valleys and the hill tribes have their own distinctive and delightful dance forms and patterns.

In Gujarat, the Garba dance is the national pastime of womenfolk. It is a simple folk dance with no developed technique, no complicated music, no intricate footwork and with no specially prepared settings or background. The *Garba* songs are simple tunes and are sung by the young

and old as they participate in the joyous art of stepping together rhythmically and clapping hands to a simple refrain of music. The movements of the steps suggest leisure and happiness. One girl leads the chorus in song and others join after, as they move round in gracefully regulated steps, clapping their hands in unison at certain fixed intervals.

The rhythm of the step is set to the rhythm of the song, and the harmony of gesture, step and song are suggestively beautiful. Sometimes they sing of Radha's love for Krishna, at others they depict more modernised themes. Sometimes the subject is religious and mystical, and at others secular or comic.

There are similar dances all over India : in the Tamil country it is known as *Kummi*, in Malabar it is called *Kaikottikàli* ; *Bhajo* is another form of it in Bengal. The well-known Ras-leela is only another glorified form of it. It is the most popular of all folk-dances in North India, and one enjoyed by all classes of people.

Of all the episodes of Sri Krishna's life on this earth, the Ras-leela with the cowherd maidens of Vraja makes the deepest appeal to Hindus, especially to Gujaratis and Rajputs. The story is gorgeous in its setting. "It was moonlit night. The perfume of the full-blown *malika* attracted the bees in thousands and the whole grove was resonant with their humming. A gentle breeze was playing with the soft murmuring ripples of the silver-flooded Jamuna. The sky-clad Krishna played soft entrancing melodies on his flute under the *kadamba* trees, casting a spell on the young maidens who had gathered around him. He arranged them in a ring and with himself in the centre, he danced and danced with such tempo that every girl thought he was by her side ; and they danced till they lost their consciousness". The dance itself is very simple but it is one of the most cherished of the Indian folk dances.

The different seasons—and they are six in India—have their own types of dances. The spring time in nature is also the spring time in the life of the people of India. It is the season of mirth and merriment, marriages and festivals. It is the time for *Holi*, the carnival of colours. It is observed in the month of March (Phalgun) to celebrate the coming of the spring, with its southern breeze, the budding of the *Asoka* flowers and the fragrance of the mango blossom.

Holi is a true expression of the emotion of the Hindu East in spring time, and it is also the time for dancing and singing when the ordinary conventions of life are set aside for the moment.

The *Dole Leela* is another form of spring dance performed in cool groves by young maidens, where, seated on a swing, they laugh and play,

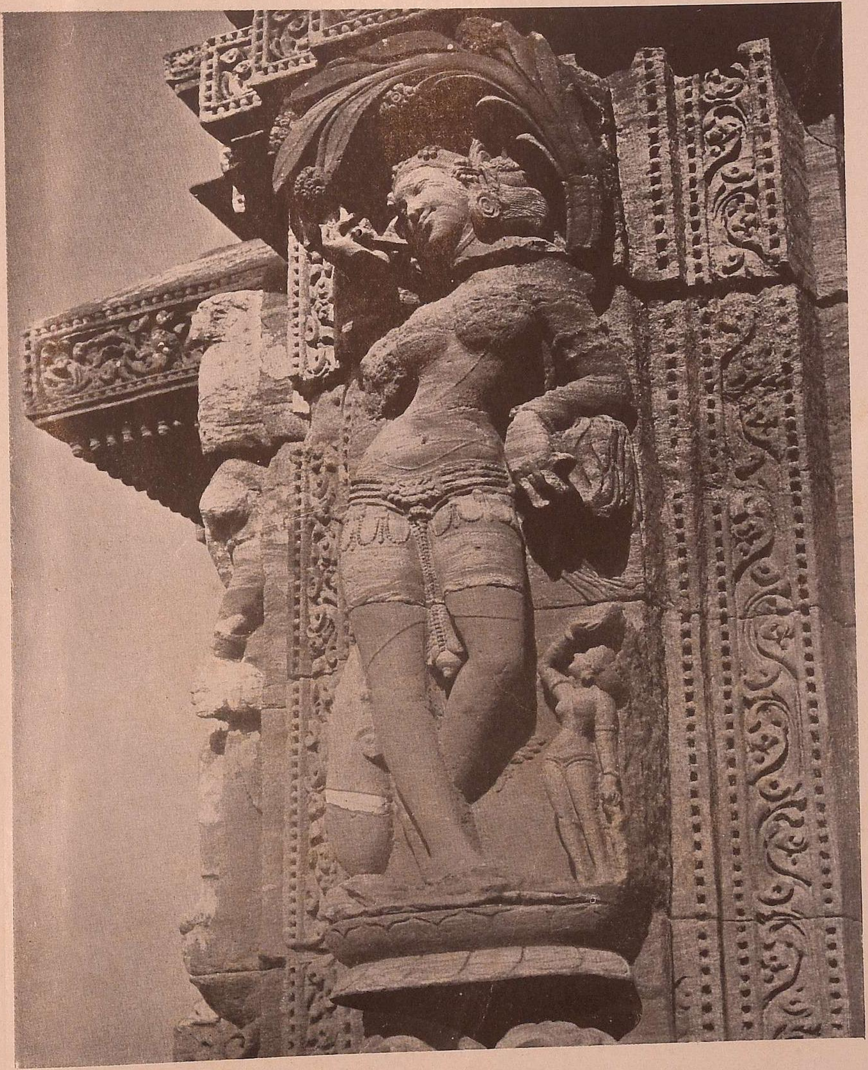
accompanied by song and music. Kajri is the dance of the rainy season, when, under the threatening dark clouds and light showers, girls dance around a plant or tree, singing hilarious songs to a rhythmic beat. The autumn has its own variety, as colourful as nature is in that season.

South India has its own rich repertoire of folk dances. Some of the rhythmic movements in the classical dances are from the folk dances. In fact all highly developed dances have their roots in folk dances. *Ottam Thullal, Chakkiarkuthu, Krishna Attam* and other dances in Kerala are really folk dances though a trifle sophisticated. The great *Kathakali* dance-drama is merely an elaborate and complicated form of Krishna Attam and of *Yakshagana*, a dance form peculiar to South Canara. Their counterparts in the Tamil and Telugu lands are known as *Therukoothu* and *Bayal Attam* respectively.

Bengal is equally rich in folk dances, the *Kathi*, the *Dhol*, the *Dhali* and the *Baul* being the most popular and attractive. In Orissa, apart from the picturesque dance form of *Seraikala*, there are several types of virile folk dances, especially among the so-called backward classes. Vital and primitive, they have fascinating rhythms, some as alluring as the *Santhal* dances in Bengal and some as powerful as the warlike dances of the Naga tribes.

The working class women in Kathiawar and Marwar dance a delightful variety of folk dance, rich in rhythm and pattern. The *Limbdi* dance is a fascinating type of exhilerating movements and spirited moods. The Bhils, the Gonds, the Kolis, the Todas and the Badagas have all their own vigorous and varied forms, some very elementary and crude while others quite attractive and artistic. On the whole, they are a rich treasure-house of the beautiful in human form and movement. An exhaustive documentary survey, both in films and photos alone can reveal their real artistic merit.

Among the moderns, who have done fine work in reviving them, Uday Shankar was the first and the greatest. He gave these simple folk dances a more refined character, not by trying to improve their technique or changing their forms, but by presenting them in an artistic way and on a grand scale all the world over. His services in this direction have been unique and inspiring ; and though many tried to imitate him, none has succeeded to the extent that he did. In most of the so-called ballets produced and presented in India and abroad by others, who followed in his footsteps, we see not only his influence but a poor imitation of his art. Much awaits to be done along this line and India needs many more Uday Shankars to reveal their beauty to the world.



Nayika—Bhuvaneswara

Nayak and Nayika, Khajuraho

THE SPIRIT OF THE MEDIEVAL ART OF INDIA

By AJIT MOOKERJEE

BY the end of the Gupta period, it must have been evident that the 'ultimate supremacy of Vedantism was only a matter of time'. Buddhism was gradually losing its initiative, and sculptors were 'abandoning the image of the silent and static Buddha to offer homage to more restless and dynamic deities'. Buddhism itself became more and more Brahmanical until it eventually lost its character as an independent movement, Buddha himself being assimilated into the medieval Brahmanic pantheon as the incarnation of the Hindu god, Vishnu.

Aesthetically, although not realized all at once, the change effected by Brahmanism came with immense plastic possibilities in a new universe of imagery, with certain basic qualities intact in apparent variations, Brahmanical art has given us so many images and forms—monstrous and sublime, grotesque and delicate, abstract and sensual—as never attempted before by any other art.

In seeming chaos and confusion, we find in Brahmanical art a sense of broad symphonic order—a joy of rhythm. The profusion that creates an impression of bewilderment soon fades into the exuberance of nature that pervades this art. This is experienced in the Descent of the Ganges at Mahabalipuram. The large number of figures carved out of solid rock 'with apparent disregard of all rational composition is seen on closer examination to radiate from and conveyed towards a central axis in its timeless descent'.

Between the profound stillness of the central head of the Mahesvaramurti of the Elephanta cave and the dynamic poise of Nataraja of South India, we have again modulations, subtle and unique, representing the most characteristic phases of the art of this period.

The sculptures of Ellora caves are so full of vitality as to overwhelm the visitor at each successive step. The Kailasa temple which, for instance, is cut, carved and sculptured from virgin rock as the artists progressed from the top downwards, stands with all its stupendous magnificence as a unique achievement. About 200,000 tons of solid stone are known to have been removed in chiselling out this Siva temple.

This rhythm of Brahmanical art finds its counterpart in the economic significance of medieval feudalism. Many divergent religious thoughts and emotions coexisted and were tolerated in the broad-based social

order. Sculptors reacted to these cross-currents with a futuristic adoption of many-headed and many-handed figures, representing rapidity of movement and change. In the realm of plastic art we are confronted with a grandeur of conception magnificently realized in the images of Siva and Parvati, Nataraja and Ardhanarisvara. The image of Ardhanarisvara, symbolizing the union of the male and female principles that are creative without antithesis, has the poise of detached calm and yet shows all the vitality of biological existence. The symbolic representation of Nataraja, on the other hand, as the essence of cosmic transformation of energy into mass and of mass into energy has all the rapture of bliss and realization. The dance, as it were, manifests the eternal existence of human aspiration in the ever-changing world of space and time.

In the creation of this panorama of gods and goddesses the artist cared little to express his own individuality. His creation yet turned out occasionally to be a complete departure—a rare phenomenon in Indian art. The artist never sought to immortalize himself through his art, and in his creation he completely lost his own identity. But in these rare departures—as we find in the so-called goddess Ganga—he brings her down to the level of an earthly maiden, as it were, and gives her all the qualities and tenderness of an ordinary human being. He makes his goddess human out and out, 'deep in all the heat of the pondering female blood, the female urge, the female nature', and enlivens her as a 'young girl of unsurpassing loveliness'.

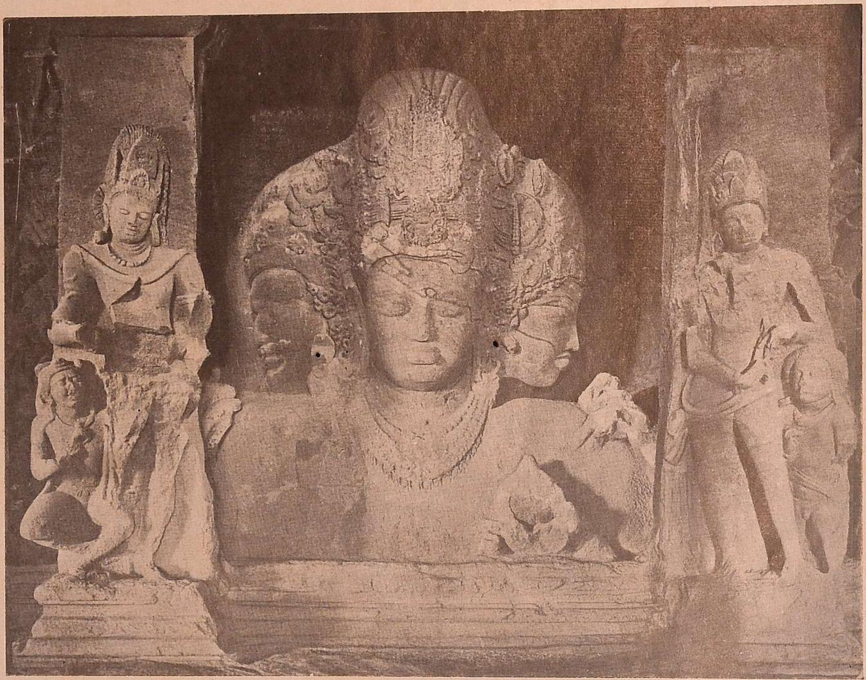
The sculptures of this period, however, form part of the architectural design, and the temple background in which these were set had a significance of its own. Detached from this background these sculptures lose much of their meaning. That is why in a museum, without the spirit, setting, and psychology so clearly associated with them, the understanding or appreciation of Indian sculpture becomes poor and inadequate.

From the 6th century A. D. caves gave place gradually to structural temple-building. The horizontal and domed tops changed into the vertical and pointed. The vertically set sculptures helped not only the upward thrust of the medieval temples, but had a decorative effect 'with a pronounced feeling for volume, perhaps foreshadowing a change in the medium of expression'.

However, no perspective of Brahmanical art would be complete without its overpowering sensuous quality being taken into account. In the reliefs of the temples of Konarak and Khajuraho, the sensual element is developed to its logical culmination, to a point where it has

Mithuna, Konarak

Ganga—Bengal



Maheshamurti-Siva (Trimurti) with dvarapalas at the Elephanta cave.

Statue in Ramaswami Temple. South India, 12th Century A.D.

almost completely shattered the aesthetic barriers and forced the ultimate realization that life is art. What is justified and fundamental in life must also be justified and fundamental in art. It is no longer a question of that 'provocative indulgence' of the female figures from which Roger Fry recoils with puritanical shudder. Here we are confronted with erotic ecstasy in all its plastic possibilities. The love-plays (bandhas) of these images rouse a baffling query in the western mind but to an Indian observer the motive is simple and clear. In the world a man and a woman unite. Nothing is so true in terms of life as the after-glow of a happy union. These mating figures are drawn together in productive forces towards the creation of new life, new dynamic forms. Filled with the sense of ecstatic conviction, they are no longer torn between the contradiction of life and social existence.

These released forces militated against the interest of the ruling class which was now strongly entrenched at the termination of the expansive phase of feudalism. A cry of artistic formalism and aesthetic injunction was therefore raised throughout the country in order to damp and clamp down the creative movement. The result was an orgy of bombastic ornamentation and hysterical tendency towards flatulent magnificence so vivid in the temples of Mount Abu, Belur, Halebid or in the gopurams of South India.

GARHWAL SCHOOL
NOT FOUNDED BY GULER ARTISTS

A CRITIQUE OF MR. ARCHER

By MUKANDI LAL

WHILE the present writer's "Garhwal School of Painting", (although completed and printed, serially, in the *Roopalekha* between the years 1948 and 1952) is still awaiting publication, Mr. W.G. Archer has used the material and important facts given in writer's work, and has published—"Garhwal Painting"—a monograph of ten pictures with notes on them, and with an introduction of four pages. He has acknowledged that "there matured at Garhwal a style of painting only equalled in romantic charm by that of another Punjab Hill State, Kangra[1]." He has admitted that "Garhwal had made one of the greatest contributions to Indian painting[2]. ".

In the foot note to the first page of the introduction he has written :— "For a preliminary reconstruction of Garhwal painting, see a series of articles by Mukandi Lal, *Roopalekha* (New Delhi) 1929, 1931, 1948-52...... his researches have made a pioneer contribution to problems of painting in the Punjab Hills." Mr. Archer has also confirmed that "At Garhwal the style is so romantic and individual that while there is certainly a marked affinity with Kangra art, the sense of any close dependence is wanting. It is rather as parallel developments from the same artistic source that the two styles must be regarded[3]."

His theory is based on conjecture and unwarranted inferences. He says "Although there is no exact or final proof, a number of circumstances, suggest certain artists went to Garhwal[4] from Guler. In trying to suggest a probable circumstance of migration he surmises that "Guler people went to Garhwal with the bride. It is not improbable then, that certain Guler artists attached themselves to the wedding party and remained at Garhwal when the rest of the party had returned." Mr. W.G. Archer has not cited any authority for this incident or for his opinion. He has probably confused Pradyuman Shah (1785—1804) with his great great-grandson, Pratap Shah (1872—1886), for whom a Guleria bride was brought from a remote village in Mandi State. She happened to be a distant relation of the Raja of Guler. Her two brothers Harak Singh and Hukum Singh

1. *"Garhwal Painting"* by W. G. Archer (Introduction page 2)
2. " " " page 3)
3. " " " page 4)
4. Archer's *Garhwal Painting* Introduction—p. 5 to 24.

came with her to Tehri. They were appointed Conservators of Forests by the Raja. Their descendants are still living in Tehri. No artist came with the Guleria bride of Raja Pratap Shah to Tehri Garhwal nor any artist came to Garhwal (Srinagar or Tehri) on invitation or otherwise to lay the foundation of or revive the art in Garhwal.

I am surprised that an art critic of the stature of Mr. Archer should repeat the error of Mr. Mehta and write in his monograph—"It was only in the portion of Garhwal known as Tehri that painting underwent a creative revival."[5] Tehri was not even in existence before 1815. And it was only in 1818 that Raja Sudarshan Shah (1804—1859) built a few houses at Tehri for himself and his "Court" after 1815. By that time the decline of Pahari Painting had commenced. There was no revival of Pahari Painting after 1818 ; it was all decline, in Garhwal or elsewhere.

It is a pity that an admirer of Pahari art like Mr. Archer should write that Mola Ram out of jealousy discredited Guler artists. Mola Ram was too great a man to spite or disparage or discourage any fellow artist. In fact he did not care to be known as an artist. He felt pride in his being a poet and philosopher, which he undoubtedly was. His motto (which has been misconstrued by Mr. Archer) he wrote on one of his earliest paintings (Morpriya Pl. 9 dt. 1775) in Kangra Kalam only by the way and not to express his disappointment or dejection, which Mr. Archer suggests. When he (Mola Ram) wrote a description of his contemporary courtiers, in 1769, on the back of his "Consoling the Queens" earliest known painting in Pahari Style (Pl. 8), he did not refer to artists. He was exposing the sycophant officials, who surrounded the contemporary Rajas. His contemporary Rajas were no less than six Rajas of Garhwal (1749 to 1833). He kept himself aloof from the court. He was always in his studio busy in writing and painting. As mentioned elsewhere one of his contemporary Rajas, Jaykrit Shah (1791—97), came to him into his studio to persuade him to come out and do some state work. Mr. Archer has done great injustice to Mola Ram who has rendered invaluable and rare service to the Pahari Paintings by leaving materials for constructing the History of Garhwal School, in particular, and other Pahari Schools in general, by suggesting that he was spiteful, mediocre and jealous of good artists.

Mr. Archer has committed another error by associating Chaitu Shah with Tehri. As I have said, elsewhere, Chaitu was a contemporary artist of Mola Ram and Raja Pradyuman Shah (1785—1804) of Srinagar—Garhwal, Chaitu never visited Tehri. He lived in Pargana Dasoli of

5. Archer's *Garhwal Painting* Introduction—p. 5 to 24.

Garhwal, over 100 miles away from Tehri. It is incorrect to say that "There flourished in Tehri a School of late Kangra Painting[6]," and that Chaitu was one of the revivalists.

There is no other Pahari School whose origin can be traced so definitely and historically. As has already been mentioned it was founded by two artists from Shahjahan's Court, Shamdas and Hardas who came to Srinagar Garhwal with the refugee Prince Suleman Shikoh in May 1658. Mola Ram was a great-grandson of Hardas. Mola Ram continued painting in Mughal style until he paid a visit to Kangra ; and until he came into contact with Kangra artists about 1765 A. D. Even according to Mr. Archer's surmise Guler artists came to Garhwal at about 1781. But Mola Ram had already visited Kangra 15 years earlier and had already painted in Kangra Kalam at least by 1769 and 1775, which fact is conclusively proved by the dated and signed painting of Mola Ram—'Morpriya' and 'Consoling the Queens'. Guler artists had no hand in the foundation of Garhwal School. So far as the documentary evidence goes Mola Ram after his visit to Sansarchand's court, gave up the Mughal style and started painting in Pahari, Kangra Kalam, about 1765. I have discovered some of his dated and signed paintings of his earliest Pahari style. I am not surprised that Mola Ram's earliest attempts in Pahari style according to Mr. Archer are "unimpressive" and looked "primitive." When Mr. J. C. French saw "Morpriya—(Pl. 9) in my collection, in 1930, he also thought it was " primitive ". But he was so much impressed with this dated (1775) work of Mola Ram that he persuaded me to part with it by paying a record price for this so called "primitive" miniature. Mr. Archer must have seen this earliest work of Mola Ram (Morpriya) in a new (Pahari) style. But he did not have the opportunity to see more of Mola Ram's signed and dated paintings and drawings of later years, after Mola Ram had attained proficiency in Pahari style.

I may add here, by the way, that none of the ten paintings reproduced by Mr. Archer in his "Garhwal Painting" are signed or dated. Nor has he given any cogent reasons for ascribing them to Garhwal. In my opinion only six pictures Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 reproduced in his "Garhwal Painting" are of Garhwal School. I discovered the original drawings of No. 2 (The Lady At The Tryst—Utkanthita) No. 4 (Lovers in a Moonlight Retreat—Ratrimen Abhisar) and No. 5 (Abhisarika) on 28th October 1954 amongst the remnants of Mola Ram's works at Srinagar Garhwal with 88 years old Balak Ram, one of the great-great grandsons of Mola Ram. Two more (Nos. 7 and 10) also might be by some artist of

6. Archer's *Garhwal Painting* Introduction—p. 5 to 24.

Garhwal. But I am positive that two (Nos. 1 and 6) are not of Garhwal School.

I have dealt with their identity elsewhere and have given reasons for it.

Apart from the fact of Mr. Archer's surmise regarding the origin of Garhwal School the present writer is pleased that Mr. Archer has published a monograph on "Garhwal Painting" and has made use of the fact and materials (though without previous permission) collected by me and has recognised Garhwal School as a distinct and very significant Pahari School.

BOOK REVIEWS

T. N. RAMACHANDRAN: THE NAGAPATTINAM AND OTHER BUDDHIST BRONZES IN THE MADRAS MUSEUM

(Published by the Madras Government Museum. Price Rs. 6)

This publication maintains the usual high standard of the material that has been put out in the past by the Madras Government Museum. It is a fruit of dedicated scholarship and has been profusely illustrated.

Buddhism came to South India during Emperor Asoka's reign. Mahinda, Asoka's son or brother, seems to have been the first missionary who introduced Buddhism in South India. Glimpses of the new impact can be obtained from the old literary work, *Manimekalai*, where we read that an early Chola king of the second century A. D. converted the prison house into a charity house at the request of the Buddhist nun, Manimekalai. The ultimate decline of Buddhism is to be traced to its conflicts with Jainism and the resurgent Hinduism.

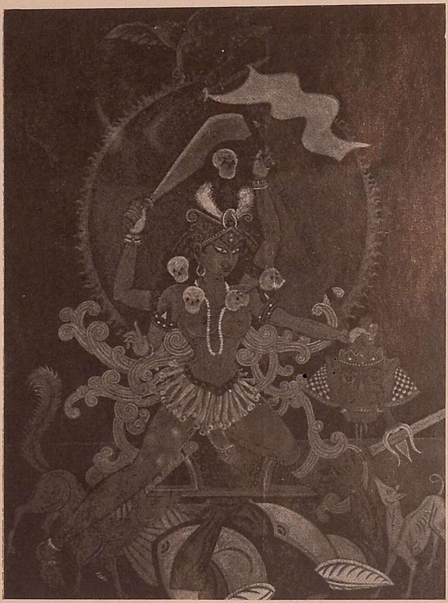
Andhra was a part of Asoka's empire. The Andhra country witnessed in the two centuries preceding the birth of Christ and the five centuries that followed his death a phenomenal spread of Buddhism. Nagapattinam was one of the important ports of ancient India on the East coast, as old as Tamluk (Tamralipti) higher up in the coast in Bengal. It has been mentioned by Ptolemy and Marco Polo. As a result of maritime commerce between Eastern India and the Malaya Peninsula, there existed at Nagapattinam, in the days of the Cholas (871 to 1250 A. D.), a colony of Malaya Buddhists, particularly from Srivijaya. The Sailendras who were the rulers of Srivijaya seem to have generously helped the Buddhists of this place. This area has been especially rich in archaeological finds, the bronze Buddhist images discovered since 1856 alone totalling about 350.

It is impossible to have so many images at Nagapattinam without a regular school of arts and crafts. The art of Nagapattinam is an art of stately repose and contemplative calm, although the dynamic and the active are not wanting. But the essential tone of the entire school may be said to be static. Though lacking the vastness, the dynamic quality, the epic imagination, the vigour and nobility of execution of Pallava art and the majesty of the panels of Ellora, Ajanta and Elephanta, it concentrated on the devotee's contemplation of the deity with passionate adoration. In this we do perceive the inspiration of the artist. Woman's beauty evidently did not move the Nagapattinam artist. The Nagapattinam artist's hand does transform the conventional image of a god or

Seated Buddha bronze,
M a d r a s Museum

Maitreya, bronze,
Madras Museum

Buddhist Votive
Stupa in bronze,
Madras Museum



'Goddess of destruction'—
Sudhansu Ghosh

(Exhibits of the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the AIFACS)

'Scene from Nasik'
—L. V. Shenvi

goddess, into something of a living divinity, with an ineffable smile and an aspect of infinite kindliness. And this is Indian art at its best and Nagapattinam was no exception. Other noteworthy features are the delicacy of carving and high relief, the material, *viz.*, bronze, perhaps enabling the artists to work out fine details.

MUGHAL MINIATURES
PORTFOLIO OF CONTEMPORARY PAINTINGS
INDIAN MINIATURES (PICTURE POST CARDS)

(*Lalit Kala Akademi Publications*)

The first crop of publications by the Lalit Kala Akademi has a welcome variety and a fairly high standard of execution.

Perhaps the best of the lot is the "Mughal Miniatures" with an introduction by Professor Humayun Kabir and text and notes by Rai Krishnadasa. The Mughals were great lovers of nature and art. Babar, busy with his empire-building, did not have much time for active patronage of the arts but his diaries reveal a keen eye for the beauties of nature and the dignity and delicacy of the human profile. Humayun came into intimate contact with the painters of Iran during his sojourn in that country. And Akbar's atelier was the crucible where Persian and Indian idioms blended into the fine synthesis which we see in Mughal paintings and later in the Rajput miniatures.

Though the Mughal album has only nine plates, it has tried to give an idea of the range of Mughal work. We have a Court Scene, a full length portrait, a Hunting Scene, a bird study by Ustad Mansur and a lovely "At the Well" where the Mughal artist left the precincts of the court far behind and got into the open country.

The portfolio of contemporary paintings which really came first, includes the works of the three Tagores, Nandalal Bose, Jamini Roy, Sarada Ukil, Kshitin Majumdar, Devi Prasad Roy Choudhury and Amrita Sher-Gil. Sri N.C. Mehta has given an introduction.

The picture post cards contain Mughal and Rajput miniatures and also a Tibetan tanka.

RAMPA PAL: PHULKARI, A LOST ART

(*Published by the author, New Delhi*)

The march of industrialisation, and in recent history, the partition of the sub-continent, have affected our handicrafts seriously and one of

the worst sufferers has been the embroideries of Punjab called Phulkari and bagh. Dedicated to a vigorous effort for the revival of this art is this illustrated volume by Rampa Pal.

The country women in the Punjab of the past decade used to spend their entire leisure on these embroideries for the trousseau of the bride. How intimately the art entered the rhythm of rural life can be seen from the fact that old women used to regard their work something like counting the rosary. One old woman used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and after ablutions complete thousand stitches and thousand repetitions of the name of Ram. The phulkari is a recurring motif in folk songs. Here is a moving specimen:

Veiled in a Phulkari, I wish I had remained a maid,
My ma-in-law has sent her son to foreign lands!
Jasmane and morning Glory, O, Ma-in-law let the parted meet!
Whyever did you send him to alien shores!

A simple phulkari adorned with starlike jasmines on a dark ground appears in Amrita Shergil's painting "Resting".

Phulkari literally means flower-craft. It is also called "Bagh" which means a garden. The motifs and designs on the Phulkari are veritable gardens of floral patterns and are so colourful that they seem to have earned the name of Bagh. Bagh or Phulkari is the common name of these shawls. The Phulkari is the embroidered shawl formerly much worn by the women of the Punjab. It is a winter garment and is both cosy and ornamental and measures two and a half yards by one and a half yards. The end portions or Pallas of the Phulkari have separate panels of exquisite workmanship of striking designs and are even more beautiful than the main body of the shawl. The designs on the Phulkari are more or less floral in character with a few geometrical patterns in some. The term Phulkari is commonly used in East Punjab from Amritsar to the Pepsu region.

The art of the Phulkari may have come to India from Central Asia, with the pastoral nomad races like the Jats or the Gujars. But with the use of khaddar as a base fabric it has today become essentially Indian in character and creation. There are great possibilities for developing markets for these embroideries in foreign lands. The author has outlined a scheme which deserves very careful consideration.

Priced at Rs. 4, the publication can be had from the Oxford Book Company, New Delhi or from the author, 8, Pusa Institute, New Delhi-12.

DR. S. K. NAYAR: FOLK DRAMA OF KERALA

(*University of Madras, 1955, Price Rs. 10/-*)

The nationalists of the older generation, when they wanted to build up a defence against the corrosive flood of western cultural domination, drew mostly upon the aristocratic heritage of India : Sanskrit literature, the great tradition in philosophy, Ajantan and Rajput paintings. The real, though not quite complete, success we have had in shedding some of our complexes, after Independence, can be seen from the fact that today we are discovering the significance of a humbler tradition, our folk culture. The folk idiom in painting has become respectable with Jamini Roy. · A wealth of folk songs from all regions has been discovered. Dr. Nayar's Malayalam work belongs to the same impulse and his dedicated research has brought to light a great amount of material about various incipient dramatic forms of old Kerala.

The universality of art, not only in its appeal but also in the story of its origins, is brought out clearly by this work. Just as Greek drama began with the ritual worship of Dionysus and modern European drama began with the Miracles and Moralities of the Middle Ages, early dramatic forms in Kerala are intimately associated with the ritual worship of Shiva, Kali and other gods and goddesses. In the course of evolution, these dramatic forms proliferated into four fairly distinct categories : ritualistic plays, semi-ritualistic plays where the original motif is not so dominant, symbolic plays making use of gestures and other mimetic devices and lastly, plays which have a frankly secular appeal.

Dr. Nayar's work opens up new perspectives for research. For instance, the genetic relationships of Kathakali with the earlier forms to which the strong resemblance between the costume and make-up of Ravana or Duryodhana in Kathakali and the Darika of the folk form known as *mudiyettu*, is a cue, have to be worked out in greater detail. Another interesting facet is the intimate association of other folk art traditions with folk drama. In *mudiyettu*, for instance, a preliminary rite is the creation of representations of gods and goddesses with the help of coloured powders.

In the European scene, the older forms are now being rediscovered and used for the treatment of contemporary values and situations. Anouilh and Satre have rehandled the Greek form and in "Murder in the Cathedral," T. S. Eliot adroitly used the choir like the chorus in the Greek tragedy. The problems of verse drama are also engaging the serious attention of playwrights and critics today. Such an orientation has yet to manifest itself on the Kerala stage. The wealth of material presented by Dr. Nayar will be found to contain numerous suggestions of value for such a disciplined experiment.

BEAUTY TREATMENT IN ANCIENT EGYPT

(Published by the Egyptian State Tourist Administration)

This attractive publication recaptures the lighter side of life in dynastic and pre-dynastic Egypt.

According to a tomb inscription, malachite was brought to Egypt in 1800 B. C. by a Semite by name Abesha who came from Asia to settle in Egypt. Since his days malachite has been used for face creams by both men and women. The Egyptian perfumes were famous in the ancient days and according to Pliny, when a woman using Egyptian scent passed, her perfume attracted even those who happened to be busy with other affairs. The containers for cosmetics were of transluscent alabaster, or of semi-precious stones like cornelian or of obsidian edged with gold. They were artistically shaped and delicately carved with designs.

Relief carvings and paintings give abundant insight into this aspect of the life of ancient Egypt. A papyrus in the Turin museum shows the charming scene of a young woman busily making up, putting on lipstick with a thin paint brush in front of a looking glass held in her left hand at the height of her face.

As in the present day world, the vanity of the ladies seems to have been a source of considerable amusement to the men folk. In one tomb of the Ramesside era, there is a scene of workmen preparing the funerary furniture for one of the great kings. The foreman is away and two young workmen are profiting by his absence to paint round their eyes with the paint used for the furniture. The whole scene has the light-hearted gaiety of a cartoon.

Photographs and line sketches make this a pleasant publication to skip through.

MIROSLAV MICKO: MIKOLAS ALES

(Orbis-Prague)

Mikolas Ales was born in 1852, lived through the years of the upward surge of Czech nationalism and in his paintings he reflected that inspiration.

Ales was essentially a historical painter. There are some artists, like Alma-Tadema for instance, who seek past historical epochs as an escape and bring back material which is spurious as history and worthless as imaginative creations.

Ales, however, never resembled these romantic deserters from reality. Neither did he have anything in common with the lifeless epigones of romanticism, who fell for the fashion of using historical subjects but were ultimately indifferent to what subject they chose so long as it was covered with plenty of rust, dust and patina. He had nothing in common with those who related senseless historical anecdotes. He was not interested in the past *per se* just as he was far from being interested in art for art's sake. For him history was not a playground for whimsical fantasies but a subject for objective knowledge and a theme for a moral and political message.

He did not just want to illustrate Czech history as a chronicler, but he endeavoured to discover its inner meaning. Already in 1877 he wrote the following to Jirasek : "The further I go the more I realize that for me the Hussite period and those peasant rebellions have astronger appeal than any other periods in our history. I am concentrating on them and I must say that the Hussite period is a glorious one ; on the other hand the peasant one is so sad, it makes an even more profound impression on me than do the exiles after the Battle of the White Mountain."

Both the Hussite revolution in the 15th century—that great and for many years victorious peasant war which in its time forced the greatest breach in the bonds of the feudal system—and the tragic peasant revolts of the end of the 17th and in the 18th centuries which were doomed to early failure, spoke to him in terms he could well understand ; he did not just follow their dramatic course but sought to find in them a living example of the struggle for the rights of the people and for the ideas of humanitarianism.

Indian artists will find a kindred spirit in Ales, for he is pre-eminently an artist of the line. Unlike revivalist painting, however, his line has a greater range. It can be softly modulated when necessary, but it can also rise to the heights of graphic vigour. An intensive study of his work should be of value to us.

BRUNO WERNER : MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN GERMANY

(F. Bruckmann K. G., Munich)

Those who can recall the establishment of the Bauhaus at Weimar by Walter Gropius will easily concede that Germany made a substantial contribution to the theory and practice of modern architecture in the pre-Nazi days. With Hitler there was a setback. The German pavilion at the World Exhibition, Barcelona in 1929, designed by Mies Van der Rohe, was an elegant, luminous structure of glass, plain metal, polished black marble slabs and white surfaces. Eight years later, at the World

Exhibition held in Paris, the Pavilion had become a massive, forbidding fortress, built in the true style of a totalitarian State.

Persecution by the Nazis exiled many German architects and America is the country which benefited most from this emigration. The Nazis reaped the whirlwind and when the roar of the planes subsided, there was a tremendous amount of debris to be cleared away, 30 million cubic metres of rubble in Cologne alone. From this tremendous wreck German initiative today is building up new cities and suburbs.

The new constructions show the adaptability of the theoretical frame work of modern architecture. Dogmatic rigidity has now been replaced by flexibility, purism by a free play of the imagination, squareness and angularity in space and line by occasional rounded and flowing designs. Surfaces are often enlivened by structural and tonal variations. Different materials are used to create a contrapuntal effect. The once sacred concept of the "unity of material" has been abandoned as technology has permitted the unrestricted and independent utilization of different building materials. At the same time architects are seeking to give individuality to each type of building. A church must no longer resemble a silo, nor a public building a factory, nor homes an exhibition hall. They have recognized that logic alone can no longer satisfy human needs, wants and desires. The intellectual and spiritual foundations of modern architecture have proven their worth. The priority of interior designs over external appearance, the emphasis on the requirements of 20th century man characterize the good buildings which have been constructed since the war. The theme to which the best architects are dedicated is man at work, at play and at home. In short, they are dedicated to humanism itself.

The publication is profusely illustrated.

HANNS BRAUN : THE THEATRE IN GERMANY

(F. Bruckmann K. G., Munich)

The German people have always given generous support to the theatre movement and today the theatre in turn is helping them to recover their mental and spiritual poise in a wrecked world.

When Germany was a quilt work of colourful principalities, the theatre flourished due to the patronage extended by the princes. When she became a Republic in 1918, the tradition of patronage continued. Realising that the commercial theatre could not do full justice to the artistic mission of the stage, the State and Municipal Governments assumed management of the most important theatres, which as a result enjoyed

both lower taxes and subsidies. One happy consequence of this was that the smaller towns did not have to wait for touring dramatic companies. They had their own centre with a tradition behind and possibilities for the future.

In the immediate postwar years, the theatre movement had to face a bitter struggle to survive. It is remarkable that at a time of acute housing shortage, the programme of renovation of old theatres and building new ones did not meet with any protest from the people. And today the theatre, helped by the historic context in which the German people find themselves, is fulfilling a most serious mission, racial self-examination. As a German statesman put it, the tragic today was born out of the criminal yesterday, and plays like Zuckmayer's "Devil's General" have helped the German people to fully appreciate the lessons of recent history.

Another remarkable feature about contemporary German theatre is that the Nazi taboo against foreign plays has been completely lifted. Foreign dramatists like Claudel, Sartre, Cristopher Fry, T.S. Eliot, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams have become very popular with the German public.

This Munich publication gives a synoptic account of the contemporary German theatre and the illustrations give an idea of the histrionic talent and the stage craft of today's German drama.

K.H. RUPPEL: MUSIC IN GERMANY

(F. Bruckmann K.G. Munich)

In the revival of music also Germany had to face the same problems that confronted her in the revival of drama and architecture. Orchestral teams had been broken up and its members decimated. The revival began with solo and chamber music evenings. The conspicuous absence of the virtuoso, in one sense, has helped the audience towards a keener appreciation of music for the attraction of glamour and personality values did not exist and people could concentrate on the actual music presented.

From the migration of the German people, occasioned by the militarism of the Nazis, there has developed an elite body of musicians, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. It is composed of musicians who were once members of the German Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague, the Karlsbad Symphony Orchestra and other Sudeten German and Silesian Orchestras. The spirit of Bohemian musical life has thus been transplanted to the old bishopric city of Bamberg on the Main River in Upper Franconia. If only the Nazis had perceived that Pan-Germanism could also work in the

direction of such fruitful syntheses, the recent history of Europe would have been totally different.

A most interesting feature of the operatic revival is that the aesthetic significance shows a new discipline. Present day German operatic conductors and directors are concerned with the meaningful relationship of music and drama rather than with mere effects. Just as the theatre has divorced itself from the declamatory style, wherein the spoken word was emphasized and unrelated to the dramatic action, so the opera, in its search for a new symbolical medium, is moving further and further away from the aria style which sacrifices musical and dramatic completeness for the sake of consummate vocal artistry. This applies to the performance of classical operas as well as of contemporary works, where rejection of romantic individualism in favour of meaningful universality makes this new medium a necessity.

The numerous illustrations in this publication bring out the superb qualities of contemporary German decors for the opera.

JOHN I.H. BAUR: REVOLUTION AND TRADITION IN MODERN AMERICAN ART

(Harvard University Press)

The story of American art of the present century is told in this volume with the help of profuse illustrations. The tale is a fascinating one.

When the century opened, the greatest names in the world of American painting were Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins. But they had reached a stability which, in the hands of lesser talents, could lead to stagnation. The bulk of the other painters were still under the influence of Whistler and their performance locked any great inner tension. Strange winds were indeed wafted to the shores of America from far off lands. But innovation was not encouraged. The distortions of caricature encountered, said Benjamin De Casseries, the Anglo-Saxon injunction "Thou shalt not commit irony".

Radicalism, when it emerged, was at first a halting affair. The exhibition of the Group of Eight in 1908 revealed radicalism only in the social liberalism of the content of painting. The styles remained conservative. But in 1913, in the famous Armory Show, the Association of American Painters and Sculptors made a grand gesture "against cowardice, even when it takes the form of amiable self-satisfaction".

In the wake of the Armory Show, there emerged a wave of abstract and expressionist art. The Immaculates managed a unique synthesis of abstraction and realism. The radical spirit emerged in various attitudes and movements. But throughout the period the tradition of unsophisticated painting as well as a romantic visionary tradition continued to be alive.

Of great interest to India will be the American controversy on native tradition and foreign influence. A spurt of intense but incoherent patriotism made some critics berate the "Franco and Teuto-Americans" who went to Europe to soak up the culture of the old continent. But better counsels have prevailed and the contemporary critical spirit is aligning itself with the plea made by James Jackson Jarves who wrote in 1864 against isolation in art. Jarves pointed out that no one dreamt of such isolation in science, ethics or physics. "It remains, then, for us to be as eclectic in our art as in the rest of our civilization. To get artistic riches by virtue of assimilated examples, knowledge, and ideas, drawn from all sources, and made national and homogeneous by a solidarity of our own, is our right pathway to consummate art."

The rear guard of the Indian revival might ponder over these words. But if the Indian radicals start claiming the wisdom of this outlook as their unique contribution and practice on the Indian scene, they will also be mistaken. For a great osmosis has been taking place throughout the centuries between Indian art traditions and those of the Asian mainland.

HITCHCOCK AND DREXLER : BUILT IN U. S. A. : POST-WAR ARCHITECTURE

(Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Today, what used to be called traditional architecture is dead if not buried and there is no realm of building in which respectable modern work is not being done.

The sheer ethnic context of America has brought to it a bounty of talents from abroad. Among the great European architects who settled down in U. S. A. are Gropius, Neutra, Mies van der Rohe and Saarinen. But America also produced two giants in our own generation, Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Contemporary lines of development indicate that architectural radicalism has lost some of its initial orthodoxy. This may sound paradoxical. But revolutionary tenets are as dogmatic as the traditional concepts they defy, though this is usually realised only with the help of the

long perspective of time. The uncompromising emphasis on functionalism has relaxed today. All in all, Wright's concept of an organic architecture seems to have had a greater flexibility for survival. Thus, the Italian travertine steps leading to the Farnsworth house built by Mies van der Rohe flow with a generosity which the first generation of radicals might have frowned upon.

One value will always remain as a great contribution of the modern theory of architecture. This value is functionalisn, though in today's practice this functionalism should be seen as not excluding a legitimate use of ornament. In a nutshell, modern architecture has learnt to emphasise structural clarity. Apart from all those features of brilliant adaptations to specific functions, the statement of this value abides as an important overtone. Even a boiler plant can become distinguished architecture in this outlook, as Mies van der Rohe has shown at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

The publication is profusely illustrated.

WIT STWOSZ

(Le Retable Cracovie Panstwowy Instytyt Wydawniczy, Warsaw.)

This magnificent publication pays a homage to Wit Stwosz, the 15th century Polish artist who took over the idiom of the middle ages and infused into it a new vitality.

Stwosz came to Cracow from Neuremberg in 1477 and in the new environment the German accent in his work rapidly disappeared and the sculptural work he did in the Notre Dame Church in Cracow is the result of a complete naturalisation of his outlook and technique.

The ferment of a new era is evident here, the impact of new ideas and a live curosity about man and his environment playing upon the traditional gothic forms and giving them a new significance. Stwosz was also profoundly influenced by the humanism of the Italian Callimaque.

The narrative manner of the illustrative art of the middle ages persists here. But artistic expression and not narrative description is the dominant value. This work of Stwosz has had considerable influence on subsequent sculpture and painting in Poland, Hungary, Germany and other regions. The publication does full justice to the marvellous plastic qualities of the artist's work, the throbbing vitality of the new realism and the discriminating intuition of colour combinations. Especially praiseworthy are some of the details, as for instance the hands of Mary and the Apostle, where all the sensitive craftsmanship of the artist has been rendered through the medium of fine photography.

—Dhiren Ghosh

Parvati's Toilet

ART CHRONICLE

EXCAVATIONS AT SALIHUNDAM

Excavation work now in progress at the site of Salihundam in the Srikakulam district of Andhra State throws new light on the Buddhist period of Indian history. These excavations reveal an uninterrupted and continuous story of the rise and fall of Buddhism in all its aspects right from its birth to its extinction. They also provide, perhaps for the first time, a connecting link between the northern and southern schools of Buddhism.

Salihundam is a small village situated on the south bank of the river Vamsadhara at a distance of about 12 miles from Srikakulam town in the Srikakulam district. Adjoining the village and running east to west is a range of hills about 250 feet high.

Salihundam, as the excavations have revealed, was a seat of an ancient *Sangharama* which flourished from the second century B.C. to about seventh and eighth century A.D. The structures, especially the *stupas*, are all of solid masonry and reveal three distinct phases of structural activity. These, with the exception of the single wheel-shaped *stupa*, excavated earlier, bear no resemblances whatsoever to the *stupas* excavated in Andhra. The *Ayaka* platforms with the *ayaka* pillars surmounted on the four cardinal directions attached to the circular *stupa*—a special feature of Andhra Buddhist edifices—are conspicuous by their absence here.

No sculptured slabs portraying scenes from the life of Buddha or his previous births have been found. This is perhaps explained by the fact that this monastery was mainly a seat of orthodox or Theravada Buddhism, which considered Buddha only as a superman. Images of Buddha and worship of Buddhistic images which come with the *Mahayana* school are also in evidence here. Two stucco heads of Buddha besides a torso in Amaravati drapery are some of the examples discovered during the present excavations.

In the late phase of its development, this monastery appears to have served as a seat of Vajrayana Buddhism, drawing inspiration from the more famous seats of the same school at Vikramasila and Oddiyana. Numerous icons of Vajrayana Tantric Buddhism have been noticed in this area of which the images of *Tara* and *Marichi* are very interesting.

From ancient accounts it appears that due to its proximity to the sea, Salihundam was a famous tourist resort, which attracted a large

number of pilgrims and visitors from various parts of the country. Its contact with the Mediterranean countries in the early centuries of the Christian Era, specially with Rome, is very well borne out by the pottery types and coins of Tiberius (57 A.D.) etc. discovered at the site. In one of the votive *stupas*, a terracotta relic casket with a broken silver casket containing gold flowers was found fixed in the outermost course of bricks.

Three more terracotta relic caskets were found at three cardinal directions of the same votive *stupa* where one such relic casket was discovered last year. These caskets contain a small silver casket with six gold flowers each. This votive *stupa*, on the basis of inscriptions engraved on the stones paved around its base, can be dated back to the third and fourth centuries A.D.

EXCAVATIONS AT TAMRALIPTI

Excavations at the site of Tamralipti—in present-day West Bengal—throw a flood of light on the culture of this ancient sea-port and emporium on the Eastern sea-coast.

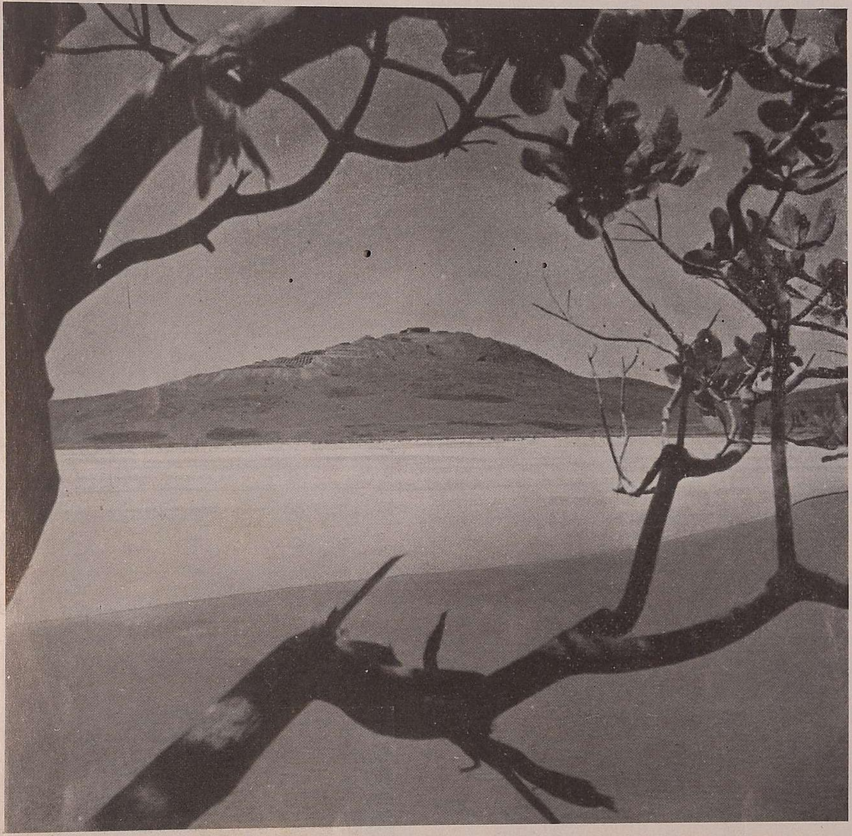
Tamralipti is often mentioned in ancient Hindu, Buddhist and Jain literature and the travel accounts of foreign travellers as a capital, a seat of religion, art and learning.

Excavations by the Archæological Department have yielded neolithic stone implements, late Mauryan, Sunga, Kushan and Gupta terracottas, cast copper coins, inscribed and stamped sherds, various beads of jasper, banded agate, amethyst, typical pottery of indigenous and imported origin, numerous play objects and animal figurines in stratigraphic context.

These finds throw light on different periods in the culture of celebrated Tamralipti.

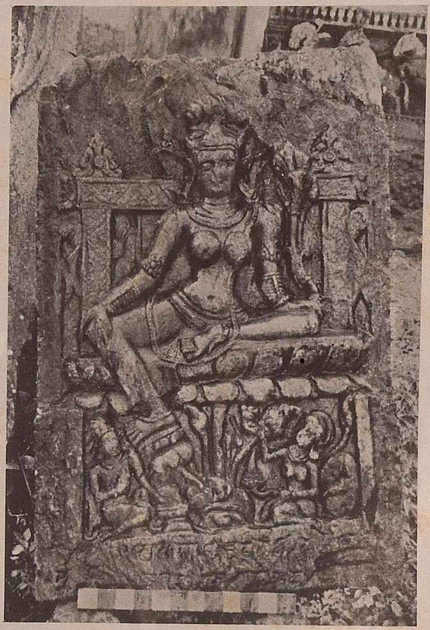
The earliest period is revealed only in one pit, giving a scanty account of the proto-historic period which appears to have come to an end in about the 3rd century B.C. The finds indicate that ill-fired pottery and neolithic stone implements were in use.

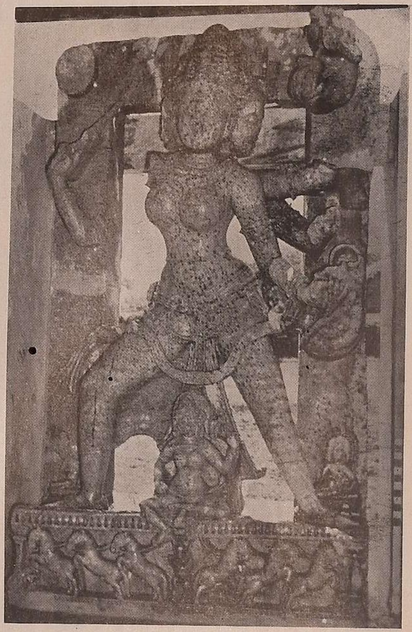
The second period (late Mauryan and Sunga—3rd-2nd century B.C.) is represented by beautiful and characteristic terracotta figurines and early pottery having some semblance to the superior black polished ware current in the Mauryan period. The terracottas are unique specimens of the talent of the Sunga artists and some of them are among the best so far found in India. A few copper cast coins found in two trenches appear to belong to this period.



Salihundam hill from the northern bank of Vamsadhara river

Salihundam, on the sea coast of what now forms the Andhra State, was, during the second century B. C. a centre of orthodox Theravada Buddhism. Later on, the Mahayana School of Buddhism also had its foothold here, as revealed by the discovery of two stucco heads of Buddha, besides a torso in Amaravati drapery. Apart from being a centre of Buddhism, Salihundam had maintained, during the early Christian era, contacts with the Mediterranean countries. The discovery of the coins of Tiberius and some pottery, bear evidence to the fact.





An image of Tara excavated from Salihundam

An image of Marichi excavated from Salihundam]

Gracefully modelled terracotta with transparent drapery excavated from Tamralipti

The third period (circa 1st-2nd century A D.) speaks of the brisk trade which India had with Mediterranean countries through this port. This is represented by the typical pottery called rouletted ware of Roman origin which has been found in plenty at this site. One sprinkler of the same origin has also been found.

In two trenches, located in the southern part of present Tamluk, the habitation begins with the Christian era and it may perhaps be surmised that new suburbs in the southern part of Tamralipti came into existence during this period A brick built stepped tank revealed in one trench and a ringed well and a soak pit in the other trench belong to this period. Banded agate beads are associated with the culture of this period.

The fourth period is not very well represented The finds include some beautiful terracottas of 3rd and 4th century A.D. having typical Kushan and Gupta influence. A superb terracotta figurine, only the lower part of which is found, needs special attention. It is characterised by graceful modelling and transparent drapery of the early Gupta period.

The story after the Gupta period is rather difficult to construe. The place appears to have lost its earlier importance and whatever evidence could be pieced together is lost by disturbance caused by digging of tanks. Sporadic finds, however, of sculpture pieces of Pala and Sen periods by local people in the course of digging tanks throw some light on this otherwise dark period.

The remains of the last phase (18th-19th century A.D.) are represented by the topmost deposits when a number of brick structures were constructed by local Rajahs and salt factory owners.

CHILDREN'S FILMS

The Executive Council of the Children's Film Society, at its first meeting, held in New Delhi in July under the chairmanship of Pandit H. N. Kunzru, President of the Society, decided to have two children's films produced by March, 1956.

The Council decided to invite by public notice writers throughout the country to send suitable stories for the films. Three stories will be selected and the Society will pay Rs. 2,000 for each story.

A Committee has been appointed to select the stories. The Committee will also examine stories already available for purposes of making children's films. Sri B.G. Kher, Srimati Kamala Bhoota, Srimati Nallamuthu Ramamurti and Sri Samar Chatterjee are on the Committee which has power to co-opt other members as necessary.

The Council decided that films should be produced keeping in view the special requirements of the two age-groups—children from 6 to 11 and children from 11 to 15 years. A committee consisting of Sri M. D. Bhatt, Chairman, Central Board of Film Censors, and the producer-members, Shri B.N. Sircar, Sri V. Shantaram and Sri K. Subramanyam was set up for drawing up a panel of suitable producers, after inviting applications by public notice.

Besides original films, the Council is also arranging to adapt suitable indigenous feature films. Three committees, in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, will examine films and suggest adaptations. Children's films produced in other countries will be seen by another committee in Delhi and the Council will arrange to have Indian versions of suitable films prepared. Mr. P.M. Lad, Mr. K.G. Saiyidain and Mr. Shankar Pillay are the members of the committee.

The Council also drew up a programme of producing full-length and short films in the period 1956-1961 and recommended to Government to make a provision in the Second Five-Year Plan for financing the programme. The project comprises the productions of 25 full-length films, 25 'shorts' and 35 adaptations of existing Indian and foreign films. The cost was estimated to be Rs. 40 lakhs and Government were urged to accept responsibility for bearing the entire expenditure.

AWARD OF CULTURAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Twenty-nine candidates have been selected by the Government of India for the second batch of scholarships under their scheme of scholarships to young artistes in different cultural fields.

The scheme, instituted in 1953, provided for the grant of not more than 100 scholarships each of the value of Rs. 250 p.m. in two batches to young workers of outstanding promise in different fields of cultural activity except 'letters', whereafter the working of the scheme was to be reviewed with a view to improving it. Forty-nine candidates were awarded scholarships for the first batch of awards under the scheme in the year 1954.

For the second batch of awards, 1631 applications were received and on the recommendations of the Selection Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice P.V. Rajamannar, Chief Justice of Madras and Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, assisted by panels of experts the following 29 candidates have been selected :

Bharata Natyam :

1. Kumari Nirmala Visvanathan, Madras

2. Kumari E.V. Saroja, Madras.
3. Sri Nana Madhavrao Kasar, Bombay.

Kathakali :

4. Sri P.K. Balan, Perur (S. Malabar).

Kathak Dance :

5. Sri Keshav Singh Kothari, Jodhpur.
6. Kumari Bela Arnab, Calcutta.
7. Kumari Sundari Doulatram Chablani, Lucknow.

Folk Dance :

8. Sri Dhirendra Nath Pattanaik, Cuttack.

Hindustani Music (vocal) :

9. Kumari Malabika Roy, Patna.
10. Sri Anant Kesho Kogje, Sagar.
11. Kumari Minakeshy Sakharam Trasy, Bombay.
12. Sri Amaresh Chandra Chaubey, Lucknow.

Hindustani Music (Instrumental):

13. Sri Dhyaneshwar Sadashiv Fulambrikar, Poona.
14. Sri Jamaluddin, Ghaziabad.

Karnatic Music (Vocal) :

15. Sri K.R. Kedaranathan, Trivandrum.

Karnatic Music (Instrumental) :

16. Kumari R. Gayathri, Madras.
17. Sri G. Shanmuganandam, Pattukottai (Tanjore District).

Drawing and Painting :

18. Sri Dasharath Gordhanbhai Patel, Ahmedabad.
19. Sri L. Munuswamy, Madras.
20. Sri R. Padmanabha Pillai, Madras.

Sculpture :

21. Sri Kewal Soni, New Delhi.
22. Sri Girishchandra Chagan Lal Bhatt, Baroda.

Drama :

23. Srimati Sudha Karmarkar, Bombay.
24. Kumari Vanalata Nandsuklal Mehta, Bombay.

25. Sri Sushil Kumar Anand, New Delhi.
26. Kumari Usha Atre, Poona.
27. Kumari Shobha Rani Seymour, Patna.
28. Kumari Madhur Bahadur, Delhi

Films : Acting :

29. Sri Bhim Singh Thapa, New Delhi.

BUDDHA'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Government of India are planning to celebrate the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha on a large scale all over the country. Delegates from a number of Buddhist countries are expected to take part in the celebrations to be held in May, 1956.

The cost of celebrations is expected to be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 50 lakhs. The Government of India are expected to invite 100 foreign delegates to attend the celebrations.

One of the main features of the celebrations in Delhi will be an international Buddhist art exhibition, which is expected to have exhibits of models of ancient monuments, manuscripts, sculpture pieces, paintings, etc., not only from India but also from other Buddhist countries, including Ceylon, Burma, China, Tibet, Japan and Thailand. India's missions in these countries, it is understood, have taken up the matter with these Governments. The estimated cost of the exhibition is Rs. 3½ lakhs. It is possible that the countries sending exhibits may bear the cost of transportation themselves.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is expected to prepare a documentary film on Buddhism and publish booklets on the subject including one on Buddhism in pictures. The contribution of foreign countries is expected to be reproductions of Buddhist frescoes, manuscripts and literature. A symposium is also planned to be held during the celebrations.

Repair of Buddhist monuments is also expected to be taken in hand.

The exhibition will be organised by the Lalit Kala Akadami with the co-operation of the Director-General of Archaeology. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is the Chairman of the Organising Committee.

CLASSICAL ART AND THE MASSES

The Madras Government has ordered that the music and dance societies who want to get exemption from the entertainment tax should

arrange at least one performance a year in a slum area with free admission to the people living in that area. An excellent move to bring the best in the classical heritage to the masses, this type of enactments will go a long way in bridging the gulf between the highbrow and the unwashed. Societies have responded very well to the prescription and the Bharati Gana Sabha, Mylapore, has given enough performances to claim exemption for a number of years !

In June, a new centre named Bharatiya Natyalaya was inaugurated at Madras. Organised by Dr. V.R. Murti, the centre will have as its objectives the popularization of Bharata Natya by reducing training expenses to the minimum and the reform of costume and jewellery used in the dance. The Centre will also conduct research in the theory of Indian dancing.

MILITARY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

A proposal to establish a Central School of Music for all the three Defence Services is under Government's consideration. This information was given in the Rajya Sabha by Dr. K. N. Katju, Defence Minister, in reply to a question by Dr. Raghubir Singh.

The Defence Minister added that at present 100 bandsmen of the Army were trained annually in addition to the personnel of the Navy and the Air Force and of the State Governments in the Military School of Music at Pachmarhi. There were three gazetted officers and 14 non-gazetted staff in the Military School of Music and a sum of about Rs. 68,000 was being spent on it annually. Introduction of Indian music in military bands was also being progressed, he added.

PLAN TO DEVELOP TOURISM

A six-year plan to develop tourism has been drawn up by the Government of India, in consultation with the State Governments. The estimated cost of the plan will be 15 crores, which has been moved by the ninth meeting of the Central Tourist Traffic Advisory Committee, presided by Sri O.V. Alagesan, Deputy Minister for Transport and Railways. The Chairman stated that the plan was divided into two parts, one part being intended for implementation during the next three years. It is expected that eight important places of tourist interest will be developed. A number of youth hostels are also to be built up in assistance provided to non-official tourist associations. The Second part of the plan covering 1958 to 1961 would benefit lower-income group tourists, develop more places of tourist interest and make further progress in promoting social tourism.

EXHIBITION OF INDIAN CULTURE AND ART IN RUSSIA

A "Culture and Art of India" exhibition was opened in the USSR Academy of Arts in Moscow on June 1.

The opening ceremony was attended by reperesentatives of public organizations, men of science and culture. Present too, were Mr. K. P. S. Menon, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the USSR and Mrs. Menon, members of the staff of the Embassy and also heads of Embassies and Legations accredited in Moscow and other diplomatic officials.

Speaking at the ceremony Mr. N. A. Mikhailov, Minister of Culture of the USSR, pointed out that the exhibition had on display precious works of Indian art, literature, folk craftsmanship, selected by art scholars in museums and book repositories of the Soviet Union. The courageous images of the people of India, the general appearance of the country which strives to follow the road of progress and prosperity have been embodied in the works of the Soviet painters who visited India.

Mr. N. A. Mikhailov was loudly cheered when he hailed the freindship between the peoples of India and the Soviet Union.

The audience warmly welcomed a speech by Mr. K. P. S. Menon, who pointed out that these were the days rich in events demonstrating the growing friendship between the Soviet and the Indian peoples. This was shown once again by the exhibition covering nearly all aspects of Indian art. It illustrated not only the level of India's cultural attainment but also the ability of the peoples of the Soviet Union to prize the cultural achievements of other peoples.

Over fifteen hundred exhibits were put on display. These included manuscripts of Indian works, scientific publications, *bells, lettres*, folk craftsmanship, metalware, fabrics, embroideries, ceramics, exquisite miniatures and modern Indian paintings and drawings. The exhibition included canvases by Russian artists of the pre-revolutionary period and Soviet artists who visited India, as well as numerous documents illustrating the study of Indian history in the Soviet Union.

MARTYRS' MEMORIAL AT PATNA

Work on the Martyrs' Memorial at Patna is expected to be completed by August 1956. The memorial will commemorate the sacred memory of those who lost their lives in front of the Patna Secretariat in the Freedom Movement of 1942.

In order to get the best model for this memorial, a competition was held on an all-India basis. But the entries received were not up to the mark and the Bihar Government subsequently decided to commission Sri Devi Prosad Roy Chowdhury, Principal, Government School of Arts and Crafts, Madras and Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi to execute this memorial.

The memorial will be one of the largest of its kind in the whole of Asia. It will consist of a bronze group of seven figures varying in height from seven-and-a half to eight-and-a-half feet.

INDIA-CHINA CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Dr. Raghu Vira, Director of the International Academy of Indian Culture, Nagpur, visited China in the summer of 1955 on the invitation of the Academia Sinica. During his three month stay, he travelled widely in China and Mongolia and collected a vast amount of manuscripts, paintings, carvings and rubbings of inscriptions.

Particularly interesting is his collection of works in Shisha language, which is lost in oblivion and at present completely unknown in India. He is carrying with him over 80 rubbings of historical inscriptions relating to the interflow of culture between India and China. There are also about 100 Mongolian paintings and representative statues in iron, stone and wood.

He visited the famous caves of Tun Huang, which contain a rich collection of murals dating from the fourth to the tenth century A.D. These have been microfilmed in colour for the first time. The Chinese Government presented Dr. Raghu Vira with a colour film of Tun Huang reproductions. He has also obtained a complete Chinese royal edition of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures as well as a photostat copy of the eleventh century edition of the Chinese Tripitaka.

A collection of 88 volumes running to ten thousand pages of Tantric Mantras forms another important acquisition. The total amount of material collected by him weighs about 10 tons.

This rich collection will help fill the gap in the history of the cultural exchange between India and Central Asian regions—Tibet, Manchuria, Mongolia, China, Japan and Korea -from about the first century to the eleventh century A.D. In India no record of this interflow of culture is available; hence the value of Dr. Raghu Vira's collections.

YOUTH HOSTELS IN WEST BENGAL

Youth Hostels mainly intended for school and college students had been started in the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. Some of Nature's

beauty spots have been selected for these hostels, where accommodation is provided free. The hostels in Darjeeling district serve also as halting places for climbers sent for expedition under the auspices of the Himalayan Institute of Mountaineering in Darjeeling.

There are at present eight youth hostels in West Bengal, of which seven are in the district of Darjeeling on the Kanchenjunga mountain route, and one is in the Jalpaiguri district. All these hostels are equipped with beds, blankets, crockery and cutlery, which are provided free of charge. The following are the hostels in Darjeeling district :

(1) Bagora Youth Hostel, three miles from Tung station of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

(2) Dow Hill Youth Hostel, near Kurseong.

(3) Ghoom Youth Hostel.

(4) Banjang Youth Hostel, nearly five miles from Ghoom.

(5) Mani Bhanjang Youth Hostel, seven miles from the last-named hostel, a place where traders of India and Nepal exchange commodities.

(6) Tonglu Youth Hostel, seven miles from the last-named hostel.

(7) Sandakphu Youth Hostel, twelve miles from the last-named hostel, offers a magnificent view of Mount Everest.

In Jalpaiguri district, Hashimara Youth Hostel, in the Nilpara Forest, is accessible by train from Siliguri.

MUSIC OF INDIA

A newly released record titled "Music of India", is described by the *New York Herald Tribune* as music "that combines something of Bach's classicism, the heady cross-rhythms of hot jazz, and the galloping finale of a Rossini overture". The disc, pressed by Angel records, is also called "remarkable" by the New York paper. The artists are Ali Akbar Khan and Chatur Lal and the record has a brief spoken introduction in English by the violinist Yehudi Menuhin. The musicians were recorded, "with the utmost fidelity and taste", while they were in the United States this spring. The second record, "Classical Music of India", features Nazir Ali Fairazbhon who speaks about Indian *ragas*, their aesthetics and practice.

GERMAN MONTH IN PONDICHERY

The Sri Aurobindo International University Centre in Pondichery observed the month of June 1955 as a German month, it being part of its endeavour for establishment of an international culture. It was organised with the material help of the German Embassy in New Delhi and entitled

"Germany—Form and Spirit of a country". The material was arranged in five main sections, dealing with the country's governmental structure, post-war reconstruction, the refugee problem, the iron curtain and export and tourism, etc.

The largest section was that of Art, which included Music, Literature, Theatre, Dance, Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Architecture and Handicrafts. A full and living picture of these was formed by specimens of handwriting, colour prints and musical scores.

Among those present during the functions were Mr. Kewal Singh, Chief Commissioner of Pondichery, and Mr. Kurt Fritzsching, German Consul in Madras.

SOUTH-EAST ASIAN MUSIC CONFERENCE

Prof. P. Sambamurthi, Head of the Department of Music, Madras University who attended the South-East Asian regional conference on music, at Manila, returned to Madras on September 5. Prof. Sambamurthi was the leader of the delegation of which the two other members were Mr. Deodhar of Bombay and Mr. Ranade of Poona.

The Conference was attended by delegations from over 12 countries in the South-East Asian region.

Giving his impressions to pressmen, Prof. Sambamurthi said the Conference gave them an opportunity to explain the features of Indian music to others and also to hear the music of other countries. It also gave them an opportunity to inspect the musical instruments of various countries of the world.

Prof. Sambamurthi further added that in the Philippines and other South-East Asian countries bamboo was greatly used for making musical instruments. It was a noteworthy feature and "it would be well, if we in India also usefully turned our attention to making greater use of bamboo in the production of musical instruments", he said. While in Manila, Prof. Sambamurthi bought a kind of violin, known locally as bamboolin, which was made out of bamboo. He was surprised to find the use of the Katsyapa veena in the Philippines. It was known as Kadjaba Veena. He regretted that this kind of veena which could be seen only in sculptures, had gone out of use in this country.

HANDICRAFT NOTES

Srimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Chairman of the All-India Handicrafts Board, announced on June 23 at Bombay that the Board had decided to set up regional designing centres in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi

and Bangalore. The Board has decided to co-ordinate work on designs with khadi and handloom boards.

Smt. Kamaladevi said that there was need to redesign ancient crafts. Traditional crafts would not find markets according to their present design and they were to be simplified in appearance. She stated in reply to another question that the Planning Commission might set apart Rs. 200 crores in the Second Five-Year Plan for the development of cottage, small-scale and handicraft industries. The Handicrafts Board had not yet finalised the details and made their recommendations.

The Board had accepted the report on the marketing of handicrafts submitted by the survey team of the Indian Co-operative Union. Both these would be considered in detail by the executive committees.

She said that the Board had decided to send nine persons for training in handicraft production techniques to Burma, Cambodia, Philippines, Japan and some European countries. A delegation of the Board will be sent to Japan to study handicraft production there.

In Delhi the Board would set up a handicrafts library. A pageant in dance, drama and music to present handicrafts is to be held in Bombay sometime early in 1956.

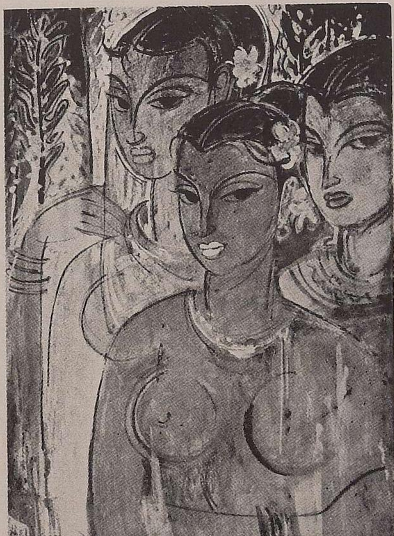
The production of Indian musical instruments is to be developed and improved.

The All-India Handicrafts Board has been making efforts to evolve a suitable marketing organisation for the sale of handicrafts both in India and abroad. Three Marketing Conferences have been organised by the Board since its inception. The Board realised that unlike other industrial products handicrafts are very special in character, that production and marketing are inter-related and that by successfully solving the problems of marketing an overall development can be achieved.

The following policy was evolved out of the Marketing Conferences organised by the Handicrafts Board and at which representatives of practically all States were present. For the successful growth of marketing it is necessary that each State should have a central emporium that would stock and sell not only its own handicrafts products but also those of other States. It should also open sales depots in other parts of the State in the districts. But for sale outside the State it should make use of the emporia of other States. Wherever such central emporia do not exist, it is hoped that early steps would be taken to set them up, with the assistance that the All-India Handicrafts Board can render in this matter. By agreeing to such an arrangement each State emporium could be a

'Mat weavers'—Kamala Mittal, winner of 2nd prize in Women's Section.

'Portrait'—K. K. Hebbar, winner of 1st Prize in Portrait Section.

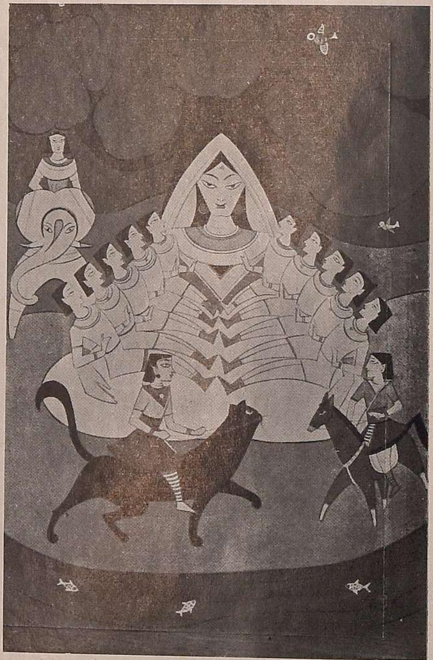


'Companions'—D. D. Dalal, winner of the President's Silver Plaque.

(Exhibits of the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the AIFACS)

'Straws and Tiles'—Biswanath Mukerji

'Basket Weavers'– Urmila Shaw



'Ma Shasthi'—Gopen Roy

(Exhibits of the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the AIFACS)

representative emporium keeping all articles produced throughout the country and could receive reciprocal treatment from the other States. This was bound to result in larger production and circulation. If there was any difficulty in coming to a satisfactory arrangement with any particular State emporium then the Handicrafts Board would assist the State Governments in arriving at a satisfactory arrangement.

Most of the States accepted this policy. When however it was noticed that certain States were opening emporia in other capitals without even having a proper emporium in their own State, the Central Government and the Handicrafts Board requested such States to reconsider the matter before incurring any heavy expenditure which follows the establishment of an emporium in other capitals.

The Central Cottage Industries Emporium in New Delhi sells goods from all over India and therefore there is no question of monopoly of any kind. It is a cooperative institution and under its bye-laws, no individual or groups can take profit out of it. It has also been proved in the case of certain States that the sales of the goods of that State by the Central Cottage Industries Emporium are larger than the sales of the State's own emporium in Delhi in recent times. As a matter of fact, the figures that the Handicrafts Board has been able to collect prove that the turnover of such emporia run by one State in competition with another is steadily getting less and less.

The Indian Co-operative Union has recommended to the Central Government steps to persuade the ivory dealers and artisans in the capital to form themselves into associations to improve the industry. The Union recently conducted a research into the condition of the ivory works industry in Delhi.

During the war, foreign troops stationed in India created a larger demand for a variety of cheap utility articles than for the conventional costly show pieces in ivory. As a result, about 20 new firms entered the field, where there had been only one. Though the end of the war saw a slump, during the last three or four years the industry has been reviving, the increasing number of tourists and foreign diplomatic personnel providing good custom here and abroad.

Before the war the average approximate annual value of production appears to have been Rs. 100,000. During the war, it rose to Rs. 600,000 and at present, it is estimated to be Rs. 250,000. The industry employs about 200 artisans.

Delhi is one of the six main centres of ivory manufacture and trade in the country, other important centres being Amritsar, Murshidabad,

Trivandrum, Mysore and Jaipur. During the past three years, the export of ivory articles from India has been steadily increasing. The U.S.A. remains the most important market for ivory manufactures.

The Co-operative Union has recommended that ivory objects should replace metalware in prizes and trophies. Another suggestion is to conduct research to discover new uses for ivory waste.

The U.P. Government pottery development centre at Khurja is being put on a better footing with the installation of a number of new machines which will improve the quality of goods produced there, it is learnt.

The centre has been placed in the charge of a technical expert who has recently returned from Japan after receiving specialised training.

The U.P. Government has also sanctioned a sum of Rs. 54,000 for the continuance of the pottery development scheme at the centre during the current financial year.

The Khurja centre was established with a view to developing the white clay earthenware industry in the western part of U.P. It turns out crockery, flower vases, scientific goods and insulators. The centre recently supplied hand-painted flower vases and tea sets to Iraq.

The foundation stone of the new building for the industries and handicrafts emporium and the museum of the Madras Industries' Association was laid at Madras on June 30 by Shri T.T. Krishnamachari, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry The construction of the building is being financed by a grant of Rs 1,50,000 from the Central Government. The site has been donated by the Madras Government.

Shri Krishnamachari referred to the place of handicrafts in the Five-Year Plan and said that while plans could be framed for the improvement of cottage industries and other production sectors, the mere framework of planning could not lead to improvement in the standards of living unless both the Government and the people were prepared to cooperate in terms of hard work. The Minister expressed doubts whether conditions in the cottage industries could be improved by imposing a levy on factory-made goods. He emphasised that better salesmanship was needed to popularise handicrafts with the public. Emporia and museums like the one which was going to be constructed would go a long way in popularising handicrafts.

The Emporium was inaugurated by Shri T. T. Krishnamachari in 1954 and is at present housed in rented premises. It stocks cottage industry goods of all types including ceramics, textiles, woodwork, canework and ivory articles.

PERIODICAL EXHIBITIONS

On August 20, 1955, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting held a photographic exhibition of the Five Year Plan and the Prime Minister's Russian Tour at the A.I.F.A.C.S. Galleries.

Mr. Bimal Das Gupta held an exhibition of his water colour paintings on September 1, at the A.I.F.A.C.S. Galleries.

On September 27, an exhibition of paintings and wood-carvings of the students of Summerfields School was held. Dr. L.N. Palar, the Indonesian Ambassador, inaugurated it.

Under the auspices of the India-China Friendship Association, an exhibition of Chinese arts and crafts was held at the A.I.F.A.C.S. Galleries, on October 1. It was inaugurated by Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru.

Mrs. Shanu Lahiri held her first one-man exhibition in Delhi on October 16, at the A.I.F.A.C.S. Galleries. On the same day, Mr. H.A. Gade and Mr. Gaitonde held a joint exhibition of their works at the Society's Galleries.

The "Pageant of India", an exhibition in photographs and sculptures depicting India's past and present was held at the A.I.F.A.C.S. Galleries on October 17. It was organised by the Exhibitions Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

On November 11, an exhibition of paintings by Mr. Triloke Kaul was held at the Society's Galleries.

On November 15, Mr. P.N. Sharma held an exhibition of photographs of life in the Soviet Union.

Miss. Y.G. Srimati held her first one-man show on November 21. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, inaugurated the exhibition.

On November 26, an exhibition of Contemporary German women's paintings was opened by Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya at the A.I.F.A.C.S. halls. It was sponsored by GEDOK, an organisation of artists and art lovers of West Germany and organised in India by the A.I.F.A C.S.

On December 7, Mr. A.A. Raiba held his first one-man show in Delhi at the Society's Galleries. It was inaugurated by Prof. Humayun Kabir.

Mrs. Sherman Cooper, wife of the American Ambassador, inaugurated an exhibition of paintings by Mr. Kiron Sinha and hand printed textiles by Mrs. Gertrude Sinha on the same day.

THE SILVER JUBILEE ALL-INDIA ART EXHIBITION

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan inaugurated the Silver Jubilee All India Exhibition organised by the Society on December 16. Welcoming him, Sir Usha Nath Sen, President of the A.I.F.A.C.S., said :

"The AIFACS feels legitimately proud of having successfully attained the 25th year of its existence. The house in which we are sitting today is the first stage of the accomplishment of its work. Mr. Vice-President, you have stood by us as a wise guide, a noble philosopher and an affectionate friend. To our achievement we owe much to you. It is, therefore, fitting that you should be the high-priest at the consecration tonight of our fresh energy and new dedication to our work. We offer to you our deep debt of gratitude. And to you ladies and gentlemen, we extend our heartfelt welcome and thanks for your kind response to our invitation.

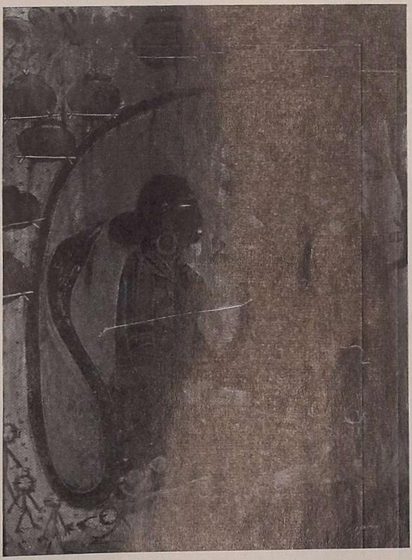
We celebrate this occasion not only with joy at our success in our past struggles but also with an earnest desire to promote art activities further.

Much has been said about the glorious past of Indian art. What we are aiming at is, however, to achieve a glorious present and a still brighter future. We made humble beginning and struggeld for our existence and succeeded in bringing this Society to its present stature. It is needless to add that we had to battle against many odds and, today, I am happy to say that we have surmounted many barriers and have succeeded to an extent which I leave to you, Sir, and art-lovers of our country to judge.

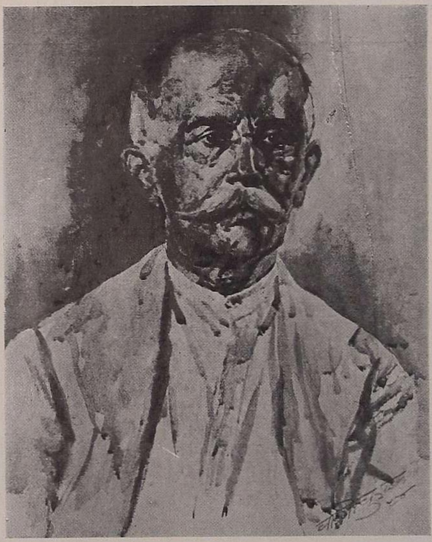
In this struggle, I am happy to recollect the help which we received not only from artists of our country but from well-wishers from throughout the world. The assistance, help and encouragement we received from sister organisations of India and from our Regional Committees scattered in different parts of this Sub-continent helped us above other things, to lead us from success to success. We do not say, however, that we have reached our goal and that our task is complete. We have yet to move onward and work harder in our services to art and artists. You are aware, Sir, of our publications—"Roopa-Lekha", the biannual illustrated art journal, and the "Art News", a monthly bulletin which bring to the door of all artists and art-lovers of our country and of the world the details of activities of this Society and of all our sister associations.

We are grateful indeed to our Government and particularly to our President and Prime Minister for their patronage and guidance. We

'Memorable Day'—Biren De



'Nag Panchami'—L.A. Yadav

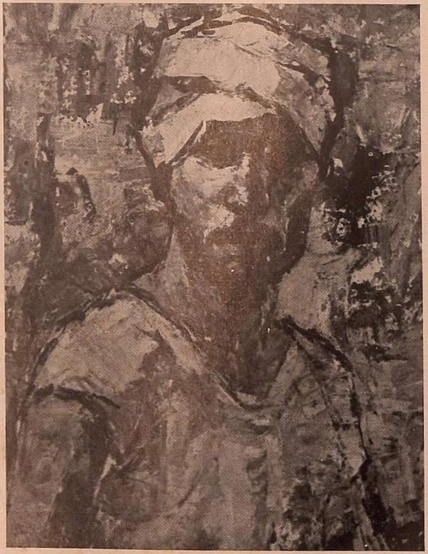


'Portrait of Mr. V. Pendse'—V·G. Kulkarni

(Exhibits of the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the AIFACS)

'Love-lorn maiden'—Jyotish Bhattacherji

'Second Chapter'—Makhan Dutta Gupta



'Workman'—K.M.V. Nambudiri

(Exhibits of the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the AIFACS)

are specially thankful to the Ministry of Education for their substantial financial assistance, which has enabled us to speed up the construction of this building. We also thank our patrons all over the country, but for whose co-operation and help we could not have achieved so much within such a short period.

You are aware, Sir, of the other activities of the Society and of the exhibitions which we are holding from time to time in our galleries. They include not only exhibitions of arts and crafts by Indian artists, but also exhibitions from foreign countries. These shows are conducted by our Society in all the art centres of India, in collaboration with local art associations and our Regional Committees. It will not be out of place to mention here that in conjunction with foreign art associations and with the patronage of our Government, we invited foreign art delegations and exhibitions from different countries. We too, likewise, sent our delegations with Indian art collections to various parts of the world. These cultural exchanges have not only benefitted our country, but have helped us to create a better understanding between the peoples of our country and abroad. Besides, since 1946 onward, we organised exhibitions of International Contemporary Art to acquaint our people with the art-works of various lands together. In the winter of 1956, we are organising the 3rd International Contemporary Art Exhibition and, I have every hope, that artists from many corners of the globe will participate in this eventful show. We believe that such collaboration is necessary, nay essential, for the growth of healthy aesthetic co-operation between the peoples of all parts of the world.

We realise that the fine arts cannot thrive without coming in contact with dance, drama, music and other allied branches, for each of these is complementary to the other. We are, therefore, building up a theatre with all modern equipments, including the best we could procure for lighting and accoustics. The theatre will be utilised both by our countrymen and our friends from abroad when they bring their cultural shows to this city.

Along with our activities, we are collecting some of the best works of art from all parts of the world for permanent display at our Gallery of International Art.

To commemorate the Silver Jubilee, we have organised this All-India Exhibition which I have the honour to request you, Sir, to inaugurate this evening. In this exhibition artists from all parts of India have participated and we have put up a selected collection on view. This show evidently reveals the different trends of contemporary art of our country.

I am taking this opportunity to thank the participating artists, the Government of India, the State Governments, our Patrons, Regional Committees, our sister associations and all those who have helped us in building this Organisation not only for the benefit of the artists but also for the joy of the art-lovers."

In reply, Dr. Radhakrishnan, who inaugurated the exhibition, said,

"It gives me very great pleasure to be here this evening and inaugurate the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, what is called the Silver Jubilee Art Exhibition, organised by the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. This Society has completed 25 years of useful work. Sir Usha Nath Sen has not detailed to you the varied activities undertaken by this Society. I am informed that every year on an average they have about 50 Exhibitions of artists from this country and artists from other countries also. In other words I have myself been here and have inaugurated a number of art exhibitions brought here from different countries of the world. I do not wish to speak much about the activities of this Society during the last 25 years. I should like to congratulate Sir Usha Nath Sen and his colleagues on the completion of 25 years. Anybody who finds out what you have done will be struck by the impressive quality of your work, for the encouragement of art in this country.

Art has been coeval with our civilisation. As Sir Usha Nath Sen said, dance, song, sculpture, painting, they have been there with us. We have not despised what is regarded as the intimate or emotional life of man. We have wrought works of joy and significance expressive of the moods, desires and aspirations of the human soul. When you take up sculpture and the way in which it has developed, we are reminded of the traditional distinction between Prakriti and Purusha. Prakriti is the material, it is the substance, from which by the presence of the soul, by the inspiration of the soul, divine, human and animal form emerge. The work of the artist is to release the image, so to say, which is there, in the imprisoning matter. By the work of his chisel the sculpture does it. If you look at the 8th Century sculpture which you find in Mambalapuram, the descent of the Ganges, and the sculpture associated with it, you will have a sense, that the rock itself is emerging into individualised form. The images are swelling so to say, into stone structure. That is what you find there.

Painting, if you take up, it again has been there from before the Christian era. In Mirzapur you have on the walls what may be regarded as animal and hunting scenes described in red pigment. Ramayana, Vinayapitika, speak to us of Chitrashalas or picture galleries. The Ajanta

frescoes have achieved an astonishing perfection. The unity of the composition, the firmness and simplicity of the line, the vastness of the theme, these things make out, that those artists regarded themselves as priests, so to say, and conform to certain sacred norms. There can be no great art unless you have in the artist's soul itself a kind of dispassion, detachment and concentration. The work of art must be a joy which feeds the soul. Refinement of the soul has been the supreme purpose of art according to our tradition.

All the sculptures, all the arts and crafts are there for the purpose of refining the human spirit. That is the supreme function which art has. You cannot refine the supreme spirit so long as you are working merely with your senses and intellect. The deeper aspects of being must come into play. It is the deep which calls the deep. Your soul alone can revive the experience of another soul. The purpose of the artist is not merely to mirror the glinting surfaces of minds what is given to you but its purpose is to release for you an idea which the artist has. He is portraying his own ideas more than mirroring what is actually presented to him. A famous artist drew a painting of the sunset and his friend remarked, "I have never seen a sunset like this", and his reply was, "Don't you wish you could"? In other words he was not merely describing the actual sunset, but was making it glow. And it is the function of the artist to bring out his intrinsic moods, his aspirations and his soul factors themselves. In one of the great dramas of Kalidasa when Agnimitra finds the picture of Malavika somewhat inadequate, he traced it to what he called 'Shithilasamadhi', impaired concentration. The Samadhi or the contemplative fire was not there to an adequate extent. It is because it was not there, that is why the painting has proved a failure.

The walls between nations are crumbling, they are cracking down and the world is to one single family. If that goal is to be achieved, we must understand other cultures, other civilisations. What greater medium is there for the understanding of other cultures, than the medium of art? You have done very well in this Arts and Crafts Society, by organising exhibition from foreign countries, by sending our exhibitions abroad. By doing both these things, you are trying to foster, what may be called, a world community. The world has gained its body. Physically it is there, but it has to gain its soul, and that soul can be gained only by the appreciation of the masterpieces of literature and art, of song and dance of the great countries. Your work, Sir, is something of which your members can feel legitimately proud. It is no use merely resting on the memories of the past. It is necessary for us to have achievements of

which we can be proud in the present. As Sir Usha Nath Sen just said, it is no use talking all the time about the glories of our ancient country. People will ask, "If you had such a precious and unique heritage what are you making of it ? Where are the works today which make you feel proud of your own achievements"? In this artistic renaissance, in this reawakening, so to say, your Society has played a considerable part. You have given encouragement to young artists and you have given scholarships to enable them to go abroad and get higher training. You have done all that art lovers can possibly do, taking into account the inadequate resources which you happen to possess. I am glad that this is the first meeting which is being held in this hall, which is still in process of building. All great things must always be building. What is built forever is forever building. There can be no such thing as a dead stop, to the progress in cultural matters. So just as this building is in the process of construction, our artistic revival also will have to be all the time moving forward. That should be the message which our ancient people have given to us. We had different schools of art, different schools of painting and different schools of music reflecting the culture of different parts of the country. Let us now through art build up national solidarity and also contribute to world solidarity. I hope your Association, your Arts and Crafts Society, will have a greater future than it had in the past, now that you have a free government, which is prepared to assist you to the best of its ability. I wish the Society all success."

257 exhibits were on show, contributed by 160 artists from all over the country. There were two special sections, one for women artists, and the other for Portraits. Following were the awards :

1. THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR THE BEST EXHIBIT OF THE YEAR :
   D. D. Dalal — 'Companions' — Cat. No. 36 Silver Plaque.
2. FOR THE BEST EXHIBIT IN ORIENTAL STYLE :
   S. Sen Roy — 'Agni & Swaha' — Cat. No. 144 — Rs. 300
3. FOR THE 2ND BEST EXHIBIT IN ORIENTAL STYLE :
   Sushil Mojumdar — 'Recreation' — Cat. No. 109 — Rs. 150
4. FOR THE BEST MURAL PAINTING IN ANY MEDIUM :
   Arup Das — 'Christ' — Cat. No. 38 — Rs. 300
5. FOR THE 2ND BEST MURAL PAINTING IN ANY MEDIUM :
   K. Rajaih — 'Anna-Data — Cat. No. 135 — Rs. 150
6. FOR THE BEST FIGURE COMPOSITION IN ANY MEDIUM :
   D. D. Dalal — 'Companions' — Cat. No. 36 — Rs. 300
7. FOR THE BEST WORK IN BLACK & WHITE OR GRAPHICS :
   Haren Das — 'A Glimpse' — Cat. No. 43 — Rs. 150
8. FOR THE BEST LANDSCAPE IN WATER COLOUR :
   Bimal Das Gupta — 'Fishermen's Rendezvous' — Cat. No. 39 — Rs. 200

9.	FOR THE BEST LANDSCAPE IN OIL COLOUR :			
	D. D. Dalal	'Red Roofs'	Cat. No. 35	Rs. 200
10.	FOR THE BEST PASTEL WORK :			
	Sumati P. Sunkersett	'Crayon Sketch'	Cat. No. 168A	Rs. 150
11.	FOR THE BEST PORTRAIT IN ANY MEDIUM :			
	K. K. Hebbar	'Portrait'	Cat. No. 185	Rs. 500
12.	FOR THE 2ND BEST PORTRAIT IN ANY MEDIUM :			
	Urmeela Shaw	'Portrait of a man'	Cat. No. 211	Rs. 150
13.	FOR THE BEST PAINTING IN WOMEN'S SECTION :			
	M. Riko	'Fresh Flowers'	Cat. No. 242	Rs. 300
14.	FOR THE 2ND BEST PAINTING IN WOMEN'S SECTION :			
	Kamala Mittal	'Mat Weavers'	Cat. No. 236	Rs. 150
15.	FOR THE BEST SCULPTURE IN THE EXHIBITION :			Withheld.
16.	BY DISCRETION OF THE JUDGING COMMITTEE :			
	G. M. Hazarnis	'Fishes'	Cat. No. 91	Rs. 150
	Triloke Kaul	'Nightscape'	Cat. No. 99	Rs. 150